

TOWN OF AMHERST

TRAFFIC-SAFETY BOARD

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AMHERST TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD

March 2, 2022

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

With none being heard, motion by Kevin Cantwell, second by Michelle Nagel, to approve the minutes as written. Approved (8-0). Members present are Chairman Eric Fraas, Vice Chairman Gregory Dionne, Dan Rider, Ken Smith, Kevin Cantwell, Maxwell Kahn, 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. Brompton Road – Traffic Safety Study Presentation. Chris Schregel begins by reporting that this item came to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board in January of 2021, at which time the Town Board had identified funds to hire an outside firm to study this street. DiDonato Associates was retained to conduct the study, and Pradeep Simlote, a DiDonato Engineer engaged on the project, presented a PowerPoint slide show that included:

- Project Location
- Type of road (connector)
- Kinds of buildings on the street (residential & commercial)
- Measurements and pavement markings
- Speeds, accident history and safety issues
- Pedestrian safety deficiencies (no sidewalks)

Pradeep's presentation featured the following talking points and recommendations:

- Traffic Calming concepts suggested by DiDonato Assoc. include horizontal deflection, alignment of intersections, speed humps, speed awareness signage, speed tables, realignment of a straight street raised crosswalks, lateral shift, and speed reduction.
 - ❖ Speed humps can be used on a two-way street and could be a good solution for a road like Brompton. DiDonato Assoc. is proposing 4-6 speed humps between Main Street and Sheridan Drive.
 - ❖ Speed tables work well with sidewalks, acting as a raised crosswalks since they will reduce the possibility of crashes while helping improve pedestrian visibility. Speed tables will not be considered unless sidewalks are installed.
 - ❖ Lateral shift was looked at but would provide limited traffic calming and thus will not be considered for Brompton.
 - ❖ The study indicated that Brompton Road and N. Woodside Lane would benefit if converted to an all-way stop intersection.
 - ❖ Speed signs can be used in conjunction with any other traffic calming measures. This type of signage has been shown to reduce speeds.

- Brompton Road has a rural feel with wide lanes and lack of lighting. The intersections along the corridor are controlled by stop signs on all side streets, making Brompton Road a straight uninterrupted line between Sheridan Drive and Main Street.
- Brompton Road does not have sidewalks and the shoulders along the sides are narrow. Additionally, the speeds are elevated making it pedestrian unfriendly as a walking area. The DiDonato study suggests sidewalks and/or narrowing the driving lanes to widen the shoulder for pedestrian traffic as solutions to improve pedestrian safety. To provide pedestrian connectivity, Pradeep suggests installing a 4-foot sidewalk along the east side of Brompton Road, but notes that installation could be problematic in some sections due to utilities and other issues.

The proposed recommendations were separated into three (3) phases:

Phase 1 includes:

- Installation of speed humps between Main Street and N. Woodside Lane
- Installation of All-Way Stop control signs at the Brompton Road and N. Woodside Lane intersection
- New pavement markings, including centerlines, white shoulder bars & white stop bars
- Installation of Radar Speed Signs, one in each direction (optional).

Phase 2 includes:

- Constructing an ADA compliant 4' wide sidewalk along the east side of Brompton Road between Main Street and Sheridan Drive.

Phase 3 includes:

- Installing gutter sections along both sides of Brompton Road between Main Street and Sheridan Drive.

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

- a) John Killian, 405 Brompton Road. He lives on the east side close to Sheridan Drive. He has questions about how a sidewalk would be able to front his property given the slope and rocks within the right of way. He also states that numerous large trees are in the area of the proposed sidewalk. He feels speed humps would help keep speeds down. He questions if the mailboxes on the street will be affected by the installation of speed humps or sidewalks.

Chris Schregel and Chairman Fraas respond by explaining that if the project to add sidewalks was to move forward, it would include public meetings to address any concerns from area residents.

- b) Katie Stahlka, 240 Brompton Road. She begins by saying how much she appreciates the work the Town has done to address the issues on Brompton Road. She has questions regarding how the phases would work if implemented, and also wonders if the residents would be involved in the final decision using a voting process. Katie would also like the Amherst Traffic Safety Board to consider poor weather and slippery roads having an adverse effect on the ability of vehicles to stop at the proposed stop sign location at N. Woodside Lane, considering the slope of the hill.

Chris Schregel explains that sidewalk installation projects would include an outreach to all impacted homeowners to gauge the degree of resident support – based on that input, the Town Board would make the final decision, and would likely not approve projects that residents oppose.

- c) Samantha Kozlowski, 35 Brompton Road. She agrees with Ms. Stahlka regarding the stop signs, specifically the stop sign close to the steep hill at the north end of Brompton Road. She believes that section of road is very difficult to maneuver in slippery conditions and a stop sign would not be beneficial. She supports the addition of sidewalks and the placement of speed humps.
- d) Denise Gagliardi, 200 Brompton Road. Denise lives on the west side of the street. She would like to thank the Amherst Traffic Safety Board for having Brompton Road studied. They agree with everything that has been said so far from the other residents, and she and her husband agree with the improvements DiDonato has suggested. One concern they have is that not all of the suggestions will be implemented at once, when it appears that all of the suggestions together would have the best outcome. They feel that speed humps would be the best solution to the speed problems on Brompton, but question if the speed humps will actually be implemented because they will affect emergency vehicles and plowing. They also feel the proposed stop sign at N. Woodside Lane would not be effective. Denise ends by saying that the phases, suggestions, and improvements all work together and she would like that considered when making the final decisions.
- e) Eon Verrall, 3 Brompton Woods. Eon lives close to Sheridan Drive and Brompton Road. He would like a stop sign at N. Woodside because of very high speeds he has witnessed. His biggest concern is for the people that walk this road on a daily basis, and he feels the best way to keep those individuals safe is to install a sidewalk. He does not think speed humps and adding stop signs will help pedestrian safety. He also comments that all the solutions that DiDonato suggested would benefit this neighborhood.
- f) April Hodgson, 180 Brompton Road. April has 3 small children and agrees that sidewalks are the best solution to improve pedestrian safety. She would also like to see improved lighting.
- g) Eleanor Scaffidi, 195 Brompton Road. Eleanor likes the idea of adding sidewalks. She would like a speed hump placed close to the mid-block hill to slow vehicles, as she lives close to the hill which makes it very difficult for her to see oncoming traffic when exiting her driveway. She asks that a sight distance study be conducted specific to her area of Brompton Road.
- h) Charlie Staebell, 25 Brompton Road. Charlie lives on the east side of the street at the corner of Main Street and Brompton Road. He is in favor of slower traffic but feels the goal is pedestrian safety, and to accomplish that goal he thinks sidewalks are the answer and priority.
- i) Sarah Cudmore, 75 Brompton Road. She agrees that sidewalks are most important and comments that the lack of space for walking is the issue that needs addressing. She supports Phase 2 over any of the other proposed phases.
- j) Chris Gagliardi, 200 Brompton Road. He agrees with everything that has been said and is grateful for the work that has been done to study Brompton Road. He would like to emphasize how dangerous he feels the crest of the mid-block hill on Brompton can be. He states it is a blind hill, especially in the case of smaller vehicles. He would like this section of road seriously considered for some type of improvement.
- k) Brad Stahlka, 240 Brompton Road. He likes the idea of having all the suggestions phased in. He agrees that the sidewalk component is the most important piece of the study. He is also in favor of the suggested traffic calming measures. He questions what the time frame would be to begin construction.

Chris Schregel informs Mr. Stahlka that it is very difficult to provide a time frame on construction with many variables involved.

Chairman Frass closes the public comment period and begins Amherst Traffic Safety Board commentary by asking if there was any consideration given to the proximity of homes to the proposed speed hump locations -- he has concerns with noise caused by vehicles going over a speed hump and vibrations in the homes. DiDonato's response is that additional review would have to be given to the effect of speed humps on the area homes.

Chairman Fraas points out that the installation of the proposed all-way stop would most likely not meet the warrants provided in the MUTCD. Furthermore, stop signs are not speed control devices. In the face of these basic objections, he questions how this would be approved. The DiDonato representatives explain that under special circumstances an all-way stop can be installed without meeting the warrants.

Lastly, Chairman Fraas also comments on the sidewalk proposal, questioning why the east side of the street was chosen since the majority of the utility poles are on that side. He also wants to know why lighting was not included within the proposal. Pradeep explains that the assisted living home is on the east side and that was the primary reason for the east side sidewalk decision. Also, there are places on the west side that are too difficult for sidewalk installation. He accedes that lighting should be considered for Brompton and can be included as part of the project.

Chairman Fraas opens the discussion to the rest of the members. Dan Rider begins by saying that the speeds on Brompton are alarming and the number of accidents also concerns him. He feels lowering the speeds is the number one priority. He is in favor of adding sidewalks and finding a solution to the speeding.

Maxwell Kahn would like to see sidewalks and a radar speed limit sign. He feels speed humps could be problematic, wondering if some other type of calming could be implemented to lower speeds.

Greg Dionne notices that based on resident comments, sidewalks and speed humps are favored. He would like to see Phase 1 include speed humps and sidewalks. The other phases could be considered if necessary.

Kevin Cantwell feels that if a stop sign was installed at N. Woodside Lane it would create a stop sign non-compliance situation. He would like the addition of sidewalks added to Phase 1 as all the residents are in favor. He also suggests asking the utility companies to bury the lines making sidewalk installation easier, but after some discussion among the members this suggestion is thought to be too costly.

Chris Schregel asks that DiDonato respond to some of the questions the residents have raised.

1. Will sidewalks increase the speeds? Pradeep feels that the speeds will not increase due to the addition of sidewalks.
2. How do the different phases interact with each other, and can items from different phases be mixed? Pradeep clarifies by saying that the humps and the stop signs go together as an overall traffic calming strategy and should not be separated. He points out that the study emphasized speed reduction, although the residents seem more focused on pedestrian safety -- acceding to both concerns, he says that combining both Phase 1 and 2 is possible.

The members agree that the sidewalk installation should be highest priority. Al Spoth from the Highway Department comments that speed humps can be challenging to snow plow drivers and additional conversations must be had with the Highway Superintendent.

Captain Kevin Brown questions the use of speed humps on Brompton Road, particularly as there is no street lighting.

Chairman Fraas explains to the residents that DiDonato Assoc. will take the information from this meeting and come back to the Town with updated recommendations. Hold, awaiting an updated report from DiDonato.

2. Fair Woods Drive – Request for parking restrictions. Chris Schregel begins the conversation with a short explanation of this item. This is a new subdivision extension that now connects Fair Woods Drive between Hopkins and Heim Road. It has been studied for cut-through traffic and will likely be topic of discussion for years and decades to come. This will be monitored, but traffic volume on this road is expected to increase as more drivers become familiar with this route. A resident contacted the Amherst Traffic Safety Board asking for “No Parking” at the intersection of Heim Road and Fair Woods because overflow vehicles from the nearby mosque park there during services -- this parking situation creates conditions which both make it difficult to maneuver the curve and difficult to see on-coming traffic on Heim Road. “No Parking” should also be added to the island section of Fair Woods due to lack of space for parking. A map with the proposed parking restrictions is displayed for the members to review, and are consistent with other area parking restrictions. Chairman Fraas asks to move forward with the proposed parking restrictions as indicated on the map. Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Greg Dionne, to install “No Parking” as indicated on the screen. Approved (8-0).
3. Tudor Court – Request for a parking restriction around the bulb of the cul-de-sac (similar to Hoviland Court). Chris Schregel addresses the heart of the matter, explaining that cars parked in the bulb of this type of center island cul-de-sac leave school buses very little room to navigate around the bulb. Several other cul-de-sacs in the area have already had parking restrictions put in place for the same reasons. He then informs the members that notifications did not go out to adjacent property owners in time for this meeting. As such, he recommends this item be held until notifications are sent. Members agree. Item held.

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

Member Dan Rider would like to make a comment. He would like to discuss the possibility of speed humps as a traffic calming measure, as other cities in New York State are considering using them to calm traffic. He would like to know if the other departments throughout the Town are in favor or not in favor of using this type of calming. Chairman Fraas responds by saying some departments are not opposed to speed humps, they just need to be closely monitored and take every aspect into account before installation. He also states that lighting would need to be added with the speed humps for a variety of safety reasons.

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. Paradise Road / Whisperwood Crosswalk – Request for a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB). Chris Schregel begins by saying that member Jennifer Michniewicz assisted with providing NYSDOT RRFB criteria. When all the data was examined, Paradise Road was found to meet the criteria for an RRFB at this location. Greg Dionne is in favor of the installation of an RRFB here. Chris cautions the members that an existing Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project designated for pedestrian and school beacon funding does not have sufficient funds to include this project. Motion by Kevin Cantwell, second by Dan Rider, to ask the Town Board to find funding for and install a RRFB at this location. Approved (8-0).
- B. Park Club Lane – Traffic Study Report. Hold waiting for copy of the final study.

- C. Town Wide Bicycle Treatments - Member comments. Tom Voigt begins by displaying a map that all the members have had for the past two months to make suggestions or additions. The comments he received have been plotted and he would like to continue to add any other suggested areas. Chris Schregel suggests the addition of Tonawanda Creek at the missing gap. He also would like the Pendleton trail system to continue to Transit Road. Greg Dionne would like Main Street from the city line to the current bike paths added. Tom Voigt reports this will be an ongoing project and he will be available for any additional changes or suggestions.
- D. Longmeadow Road bike Lane – Hold until April 2022, awaiting neighborhood response on the matter of on-street parking elimination.
- E. Kings Highway / Berryman crossing guard review – Hold waiting for weather conditions to improve.
- F. Rockingham Counts – Hold waiting for weather conditions to improve.

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

- Dan Rider would like to comment on the Letter from the DOT regarding Harlem Road to Burroughs Drive that was in the packet as an FYI. He would like that letter sent to any residents originally involved with that item, to which Chris Schregel informs the members that this has already been done.

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 April 6, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher P. Schregel
Traffic Safety Coordinator