

TOWN OF AMHERST

TRAFFIC-SAFETY BOARD

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT – 1100 NORTH FOREST ROAD, WILLIAMSVILLE, NEW YORK 14221
TRAFFIC SAFETY COORDINATOR - TELEPHONE 631-7154 - FAX 631-7222

AMHERST TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD

August 3, 2022

The August meeting of the Amherst Traffic Safety Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on August 3, 2022, Chairman Fraas presiding. First order of business was approval of the June 15, 2022 meeting minutes, which Chairman Fraas begins by asking if any additions or corrections are needed. Maxwell Kahn would like page 1 changed to add a period on the first two bullet points. Motion by Kevin Cantwell, seconded by Dan Rider to approve the minutes as corrected, approved (9-0). Members present were Chairman Eric Fraas, Vice Chairman Gregory Dionne, Dan Rider, Ken Smith, Jennifer Michniewicz, Kevin Cantwell, Mark Storch, Kristin Goss, and Maxwell Kahn. Departmental Liaisons included Thomas Voigt of the Planning Department, Bill Prenevau of the Building Department, Captain Kevin Brown of the Police Department and Christopher Schregel, Traffic Safety Coordinator/Engineering Liaison. Also in attendance was Michael Szukala, Councilmember Liaison and Patrick Lucey, Highway Superintendent. Guest list on record at the Town's Engineering Department.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Heim Road Pedestrian Crossing – Request for a crossing and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the Peanut Line near the Islamic Society of Niagara Frontier (ISNF) mosque. Chris Schregel begins with some background for this item, reminding the Traffic Safety Board that they recently reviewed the parking situation in this area specific to the Fair Woods Drive roadway extension. As a result, recommendations were made to the Town Board to restrict parking in various locations along Fair Woods Drive. The Town Board approved a portion of the recommendations and asked that the Traffic Safety Board consider establishing a pedestrian crossing with flashing beacon at the Peanut Line to assist mosque attendees crossing Heim Road. The Engineering Department conducted a pedestrian study during Friday services at ISNF, and it was determined that the criteria for a crosswalk with Flashing Beacon was met.

Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

- a) Donna Chestnut, 630 Heim Road. She comments that she has observed parking close to her house during Friday services at the mosque. She is in support of the flashing beacon with crosswalk or any type of traffic control. She has lived at this location for over 20 years and has noticed an increase in traffic over the years, sometimes making it difficult to back out of her driveway. She feels that some type of control is needed, seeing as Heim Elementary is to the south and Williamsville North to the north with associated numbers of children traversing Heim Road. She closes by saying that she also supports the paving of the Peanut Line for the entire community to use.
- b) Caroline Steenbakker, 46 Montbleu Drive. She begins by saying she is not against the crosswalk but feels it would create a false sense of safety with the parking issues in that area on Fridays. She states that no sidewalks are in place on the corner of Montbleu and Heim, which forces pedestrians to walk in the street. This safety concern is compounded when vehicles are also parked in the street.
- c) Dominic Licata, 845 Robin Road. He has lived in this area for 12 years. He supports the proposed crosswalk and RRFB. His backyard is located adjacent to the Peanut Line, and he is a bicyclist who not only uses the path personally but also conducts group bike rides on it. He feels that a crosswalk at the proposed location will fulfill two critical infrastructure needs by both improving access and safety for pedestrians crossing Heim Road, as well as calming traffic. Mr. Licata also states that the development of the Peanut Line Trail will serve as a forward thinking use of Town resources by establishing infrastructure for accommodating pedestrians, runners, bicyclists and people of all abilities. He points out that a fully developed Peanut Line Trail will connect the last remaining section of the rail bed with already established

Clarence and Tonawanda trails. Studies have shown that these trails have numerous benefits including increasing property values, increasing patronage to nearby businesses, and improving mental and physical health for those individuals using them. He concludes by addressing any resident concerns by stating that crime and vandalism will not increase due to the trails.

- d) Jaime Maerten-Rivera, 112 Montbleu Drive. She is in favor of the crosswalk and understands that a large number of pedestrians from the mosque will utilize the crosswalk at the proposed location. She would, however, prefer the location of the crosswalk and flashing beacon be closer to the Montbleu and Heim intersection, or even at the Dodge and Heim intersection to accommodate the children walking to Williamsville North High School. She does acknowledge that under current conditions determining the best location could be difficult since some areas of Heim have sidewalks and some do not, but she would like to see the final placement consider the safety of pedestrians walking to the mosque and other nearby localities. She also states that the parking for the mosque is still an issue, adding that school buses have trouble navigating the turn onto Montbleu when vehicles are parked at the entrance. She would like to see this problem addressed with police enforcement or additional restrictions. She is in favor of developing the Peanut Line to make it more accessible for individuals that would like to utilize it for walking or biking.
- e) Melany Amson, 956 Main Street. She is one of the founders of the Peanut Trail Ride and she and the other bike riders from her group enjoy the area. She is in favor of the crosswalk and beacon installation and feels the development of the Peanut Line is part of a process to make this a safe bike and pedestrian friendly community.
- f) Emmanuel Steenbakkar, 46 Montbleu. He is not opposed to the crosswalk, beacon or the development of the Peanut Line Trail, but he would like the addition of a sidewalk on Heim close to the Dodge/Heim intersection to make this intersection safer for those pedestrians crossing there. He thinks the parking issue on Montbleu, due to the Friday services at the mosque, needs to be addressed. He informs the members that his neighbor had a backyard fire and the fire truck was not able to navigate the turn onto the street due to illegally parked vehicles. He also states that, in his opinion, there will be vehicle non-compliance at the proposed crosswalk.
- g) Jim Robinson, 32 Montbleu. He is the individual that had the fire in his backyard. He comments that cars are often parked illegally in front of his house on Fridays. He would like the parking issue addressed.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the discussion up to the members. Kevin Cantwell begins by clarifying that based on the residents' input, two issues have emerged that need addressing:

- The installation of a crosswalk and RRFB
- Illegal parking, specifically on Fridays, which is not on the agenda for August

Maxwell Kahn Would like to see the RRFB installed in the proposed area at the Peanut Line. Chairman Fraas agrees, further suggesting that the missing section of sidewalk specified during the public commentary close to Heim / Dodge be reviewed by the Sidewalk Technical Review Committee. He also informs the residents that safety measures and improvements can be looked at in other locations if requested in the future. Kevin Cantwell has concerns related to the curve on Heim causing sight issues, feeling some type of pedestrian warning sign might be appropriate. Greg Dionne is in favor of the RRFB and crosswalk at the Peanut Line location along with advanced warning signage. He also would like appropriate parking restrictions implemented close to the crosswalk. Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Maxwell Kahn, to recommend the installation

of the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon at the Peanut Line and Heim Road. Approved 9-0. Engineering to request funding through next year's Capital Improvement Program.

2. Lebrun Road – Request for a parking restriction on the south side of Lebrun Road from Mona Drive to the municipal boundary. Chris Schregel begins by stating that the resident broaching this item contacted the Amherst Traffic Safety Board requesting a small section of Lebrun Road be signed "No Parking", consistent with all the other sections of road in the area already posted "No Parking". This particular section of Lebrun is on a curve and ends at the municipal boundary with the City of Buffalo.

Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

- a) Brad Tuyn, 390 Lebrun Road. He moved back to Amherst a few years ago and he drives this section of Lebrun every day on his way downtown. On two occasions he came close to a head-on collision due to a vehicle being parked on the curve in the small section that currently allows parking. He is not sure if this section of road is missing signage or if it was never signed to begin with, but he feels this is a very dangerous section and should be signed "No Parking", just like the surrounding sections of Lebrun have been signed.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the Board discussion by directly making a motion, second by Kevin Cantwell, for the installation of a "No Parking" sign as indicated on the displayed map. Approved 9-0. Dan Rider adds that trees are covering up the existing signage and asks that trimming occur.

3. Washington Highway – Request to extend the school speed zone towards Westmoreland Road. Chris Schregel begins with some history related to this item, based on a request brought to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board by a Washington Highway resident concerned with speeding on Washington Highway between Main Street and Westmoreland Road. This section of Washington Highway is close to the Amherst Middle School, Amherst High School and Amherst Community Church. Currently, part of Washington Highway is posted as a school zone (shown in red on the screen), but it does not extend south to Westmoreland Road.

Counts have been completed showing an 85th percentile speed of 32 mph with 360 vehicles per day northbound, and southbound an 85th percentile speed of 30 mph with 211 vehicles per day - this count was conducted when school was not in session. The location of the Amherst Community Church Child Care allows for the possibility of extending the current School Zone, which would help calm speeding in the area. The Engineering Department reviewed the data, and ultimately concluded that the criteria was met for a School Zone extension, the location of which is displayed on the screen. The resident is also requesting enhanced crosswalks at the intersection of Washington and Westmoreland similar to what Town Highway painted near Amherst Middle School. Motion by Kevin Cantwell, second by Maxwell Kahn, to extend the school zone as proposed. Approved 9-0. A pedestrian count during school is requested to determine if the enhanced crosswalks at Washington and Westmoreland should be installed.

4. Troy Del Way – Various traffic concerns related to pedestrian safety and cut-through traffic. Chris Schregel begins with some background on this item, saying that this came to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board as an e-mail citing multiple issues:
 - Stop sign non-compliance at Catherine and Troy Del Way as vehicles are not stopping at the stop sign <resident video shown>
 - Request for flashing lights or crosswalks (enhancement of the pedestrian crossings at the intersection)
 - Request to lower the speed limit to 25 mph for all of Troy Del Way

Counts from 2009 indicated the 85th percentile speeds northbound at 38 mph and southbound at 34 mph. The resident also has informed the Amherst Traffic Safety Board that Troy Del Way is a cut-through for traffic between Sheridan and Maple. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

- a) Charles Matlach, 160 Troy Del Way. He lives two houses down from the intersection of Catherine and Troy Del Way. He states that on any morning while walking in his neighborhood he witnesses vehicles not stopping at the stop signs. He circulated a petition in his neighborhood regarding the stop sign non-compliance to present to Captain Brown from the Police Department. He suggests a flashing stop or stop warning sign to better alert drivers that they are approaching all way stop intersection. He also states that Troy Del Way is used by numerous pedestrians and bicyclists. He is asking for police presence and some enhancement to the stop signs.
- b) Donna Matlach, 160 Troy Del Way. She begins by thanking the Police Department and Captain Brown for being so helpful and understanding. Mrs. Matlach reports that the first week she lived in this neighborhood she was walking her dog and was almost struck by a vehicle. She would like to have some type of pavement markings to indicate a pedestrian walkway. She comments that a number of children and young families live in this area and she would like a solution to make crossing the street safer for everyone.
- c) Alfred Rinkerman, 25 Troy Del Way. He explains that Troy Del Way does not have any crosswalks. He would like some safe crossing zones for all the pedestrians using this area to walk and bike.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the discussion to the members. Kevin Cantwell begins the discussion by inquiring about the width of Troy Del Way, which is shown to be 30 feet. Member Cantwell suggests a parking lane on one side of the street or bike lanes on both sides to narrow the driving lanes. Dan Rider suggests parking vehicles on the road to slow traffic, and continues by saying he would like to see a parking lane on both sides of the road to narrow the driving lanes. Chairman Fraas explains to the residents the reasoning behind these similar suggestions, stating that Troy Del Way is wider than usual, which psychologically causes drivers to be comfortable with higher speeds. He continues, saying that the current stop sign at Troy Del Way and Catherine is likely an unwarranted stop sign, and this is the likely root cause of the non-compliance at this intersection. He would like to have traffic counts done on Troy Del Way and would like to consider speed humps in the future. Chris Schregel explains that the installation of a crosswalk would need to include ADA ramps and connectivity to a public sidewalk. Chairman Fraas and Maxwell Kahn suggest moving the location of the crosswalk to The Paddock as this is a busier intersection and the alignment for a crosswalk might be better. Greg Dionne agrees that new counts would be helpful as the counts on file are outdated. He also would like the neighborhood to coordinate locations of parked cars in the street to slow traffic, agrees that speed humps should be considered for this section of road, and also feels it would be worthwhile to install a crosswalk and ADA ramps at the intersection of Catherine and Troy Del Way. Dan Rider would like to see what pavement striping options are available to improve conditions on Troy Del Way. Chairman Fraas asks to hold this item until September pending traffic counts, and also asks that the Highway and Engineering Departments provide the Amherst Traffic Safety Board with correct information as to the requirements for bike lanes, fog lines or parking lanes. Item held.

5. Autumnview / Countryside intersection –Traffic control review. Chris Schregel begins with a short explanation of this item, saying that this was brought to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board by the Highway Department. As displayed on the screen, the intersection of Countryside and Autumnview has no traffic control device. Chris Schregel explains that the MUTCD gives the option of signing or leaving the intersection as is because of low volume. Greg Dionne would like the stop sign installed as shown on the screen, remarking this is consistent with how the rest of the Town is signed. Motion from Greg Dionne, second by Jennifer Michniewicz, to have the stop sign installed on Autumnview and at the T-intersection of Countryside. Chairman Fraas would like to leave the intersection as is. Roll call (yes = install a stop sign) (no = leave as is):

Jennifer Michniewicz–yes
Greg Dionne–yes
Maxwell Kahn–yes
Ken Smith–yes
Mark Storch–yes
Kristin Goss–yes
Eric Fraas–no
Kevin Cantwell–no
Dan Rider–no

Recommendation to install a stop sign approved 6-3.

6. Westfield Road – Traffic Calming. Chris Schregel begins by saying that the Highway Department will be starting a road paving project on Westfield Road. Past counts on Westfield indicate that it has one of the highest 85th percentile speeds on a 30 mph residential roadway, with an 85th percentile collected showing 41 mph northbound and 38 mph southbound. The Town of Amherst recently started considering the use of speed humps as a traffic calming measure, and the Highway Department has asked to discuss the subject of speed humps with the Traffic Safety Board. Chris Schregel displays on-screen the prospective speed hump locations on Westfield, embellished with different styles of speed humps and signage to consider. Chairman Fraas opens the floor to Highway Superintendent Pat Lucey:

- a) Patrick Lucey, Highway Superintendent. He has been asked to consider speed humps on other problematic roads but found those streets, for a variety of reasons, not to be good candidates for speed humps. He states that if the budget permits, Highway plans on paving Westfield Road this year, cautioning the members that freshly paved roads can cause drivers to drive at a faster speed. A letter was sent to Westfield residents from the Highway Department asking for input – this letter called attention to possible issues regarding speed humps, among them noise, driver non-compliance, and the negative effects on Town snow plow trucks and emergency response times. Patrick Lucey comments that it is difficult to predict what issues might arise since the Town has never used speed humps before. He received 20 responses to the resident letter, with 12 people in favor of speed humps, and 8 opposed.

Concerns from residents not wanting the speed humps included:

- Not necessary
- Waste of money
- Do not want to turn Amherst Roads into city roads

Residents in favor of the speed humps offered the following reasons:

- Speeding Vehicles
- Children
- Cut through traffic

Patrick Lucey looked at the federal guidelines for speed humps which included installation, placement, curbing, and signage. After considering the many factors, he is of the opinion that Westfield Road would be a good candidate for testing speed humps in the Town of Amherst. He suggests starting with just two humps since there are so many unknowns as to the effects of this new approach. Of immediate concern are snow removal complications and possible damage to Highway Department trucks, as well as school bus problems and emergency vehicle response delays. He believes the Highway Department will be able to cost effectively install the humps, but a major consideration before this can be addressed will be the budget, with costs being calculated to determine if this is a viable project for this year.

Questions and concerns from the members:

- Maxwell Kahn would like to know if the maintenance for speed humps is more involved. Warns that other residents from other streets will request speed humps. He would like to establish guidelines that residential streets must meet before speed humps can be installed if the pilot project on Westfield is successful. He is also concerned with noise pollution. Questions if ice and slippery weather will cause a dangerous situation for vehicles.
- Eric Fraas would like to know the estimated paving date. He believes that the speeding issues will move over to the next street [Ivyhurst Road] if speed humps are installed on Westfield Road.
- Kevin Cantwell remarks that where possible speed humps are avoided by drivers. He is concerned surrounding roads will become congested with drivers avoiding the conditions on Westfield.
- Chris Schregel suggests a traffic count be done on both Westfield Road and Ivyhurst Road before and after the installation of speed humps on Westfield so that the Town has data to compare.
- Dan Rider would like to see some type of striping added to Westfield as an alternative to speed humps in order to slow traffic.
- Jennifer Michniewicz feels this is a good opportunity to see if speed humps are effective. She sees this as a trial run. If it's not successful, then other options can be considered.
- Chairman Fraas is in favor of moving forward with the installation of speed humps, but would like them installed as suggested, using 3 humps along the length of Westfield.
- Chris Schregel would like to know if premade rubber speed humps should be considered. Pat Lucey acknowledges the benefits of this product, but prefers to install an asphalt version on Westfield Road.

Chairman Fraas asks for a vote from the members, In Favor / Not in Favor of three (3) asphalt speed humps to be installed on Westfield Road as a traffic calming measure, having a test period of 2 years.

In Favor – Goss, Smith, Rider, Fraas, Kahn, Storch, Dionne, Michniewicz

Not in Favor – Cantwell

Approved 8-1.

7. Bassett Road & St. Gregory Court curve – Pedestrian safety concerns. Chris Schregel begins with a brief explanation of this item, displaying on-screen an aerial photograph of the 90 degree curve in the road that currently does not have any crosswalk. A resident has reached out asking for some type of pedestrian accommodation and a safe crossing at this location. This corner currently

has ADA curb ramps, sidewalks and nearby pathways. One vehicular accident was recorded in the past 4 years due to weather.

Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

- a) Leigh Petri, 49 Promenade. Her three children attend St. Gregory the Great School. She adds that three senior living facilities along with the school surround this 90 degree curve area, and is very concerned about children and seniors crossing at this location. She comments that the 90 degree curve, combined with the absence of any pavement markings or signs (stop signs most obviously) make this a very dangerous location. Ms. Petri explains that school pick-up is especially dangerous due to the number of vehicles and buses in and around the curve. She states it is very dangerous for a child or senior to cross in this area.
- b) Jaime Maerten-Rivera. She agrees with Ms. Petri and goes on to say that children frequent this intersection to access Bassett Park. She would like to see a safe area for everyone to cross created here, and the absence of sidewalks, crosswalks and signage in this area creates a problem for all pedestrians.
- c) Marie Goalle, 66 Sandhurst. She bikes in this area and understands the issues. Her children attend Maple West Elementary where similar problems have occurred. She suggests that St. Gregory the Great School hire someone to oversee crossing and congestion issues as Maple West School has done. She feels that this is not necessarily a Town issue, but might be better handled privately by the school.
- d) Leigh Petri comments on Ms. Goalle statements. She would like to make it clear that the added pedestrian accommodations she is requesting would be for all people using the park, not just the children from St. Gregory the Great School.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period for this item and opens the discussion to the members, opening by saying he also lives in this area and is very familiar with this corner. He has noticed vehicles parked in this area at very random times of the day. He also observes that children coming from the school to access the park already have a safe route leading out of the front of the school to a sidewalk that goes directly to the park entrance -- that being said, he would still like to see some type of solution for those residents entering the park from other locations. Maxwell Kahn would like to see striping added. Chairman Fraas and Jennifer Michniewicz would like to see a crosswalk, but acknowledge the difficulty of determining a safe location. Chairman Fraas would like the Engineering Department to study this location to determine the best location for striping. Maxwell Kahn suggests the temporary addition of pedestrian signs while waiting for any other safety measures. Jennifer Michniewicz feels that signage should wait until the location of the crosswalk is determined to avoid driver confusion. Dan Rider suggests asking the Town for parking lanes or a parking lot. Kevin Cantwell would like a pedestrian count during school hours. Hold waiting for results of a sight distance study and pedestrian count. Engineering to contact school regarding the residents' concerns brought to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board. Item held.

- 8. Amherst Traffic Safety Board member attendance – Chairman Fraas opens the discussion by referring the members to the By-laws for the Amherst Traffic Safety Board. Member Kristen Goss explains her recent absences that were unavoidable. Chairman Fraas informs the members that member Michelle Nagel has missed 4 consecutive meetings, which per the By-laws must be addressed at this meeting. Ms. Nagel has requested a 6 month leave of absence from the Amherst Traffic Safety Board. After member discussion, motion by Jennifer Michniewicz, second by Greg Dionne, to recommend granting Ms. Nagel two (2) months of leave to be added to the already taken 4 months for a total of 6 months leave. Leave expires after the October 2022 meeting. Approved 9-0.

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

Chairman Fraas has one referral for the Highway Department. The tree southbound on Paradise approaching the crosswalk by Williamsville East High School needs to be trimmed as limbs are blocking the crosswalk sign.

Jennifer Michniewicz also would like to add new business. She asks that the Highway Department update its Work Zone signage to the current MUTCD and NYS supplement standards. She observed an old sign from the 1980s with the wording of "Men Working". This sign is no longer appropriate and should be upgraded to current standards. Refer to Highway to update all signage to be compliant with the MUTCD and including the NYS supplement.

Greg Dionne would like to add the intersection of Rosedale and Longmeadow, noting that ADA curb ramps are currently being installed. He comments that this intersection is part of the inter-campus bike route and would like to see single two line crosswalks on all four legs of the intersection to help with safety at this heavily traveled area. Recommendation to be sent to the Highway Department. Approved 9-0.

Chairman Fraas asks if there is any other new business -- none being heard he closes New Business and opens Old Business for discussion.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Allenhurst / Cambridge – Traffic counts. Hold for traffic counts.

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

SUBJECT: Proposed Preliminary Plat
ADDRESS: 468 Harding
PETITIONER: Harding Road, LLC Petitioner

X PROPOSED PRELIMINARY PLAT
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

- Traffic Safety Board supports the installation of sidewalks along the frontages of all proposed lots, and will not support a sidewalk waiver if requested by the individual owners/builder.
-

SUBJECT: Proposed Minor Site Plan Review SP-2022-05
ADDRESS: 7740 Transit Road
PETITIONER: 7740 Transit Road Inc.

X MINOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

1. Remove proposed sidewalk leading to the Sheridan Drive Ramp.
 2. Install detectable warning grids on all internal ADA sidewalk ramps.
 3. Clearly identify that there is a flush curb adjacent to the handicap parking stalls.
-

SUBJECT: Request to Rezone 6.27± Acres Of Land From GB To DC-5
ADDRESS: 4110 – 4120 Sheridan Drive (Portion)
PETITIONER: Sheridan Commons LLC

Do you agree with all statements made? No, Not Reviewable

1. Traffic impact Study Needed at time of Rezoning Review

Motion by Kevin Cantwell to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 pm, second by Chairman Fraas.
Approved 9-0. Next meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher P. Schregel
Traffic Safety Coordinator