

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

October 5, 2022

The October meeting of the Amherst Traffic Safety Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on October 5, 2022, Chairman Eric Fraas presiding. He explains that with only five (5) members in attendance, no voting may occur. That being said, Chairman Fraas opens the first order of business, asking if any changes or corrections are needed to the September 7, 2022 meeting minutes. None being heard, this item will be held for a vote until the November, 2022 meeting. Members present were Chairman Fraas, Dan Rider, Mark Storch, Jennifer Michniewicz and Kevin Cantwell. 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. Guest list on record at the Town's Engineering Department.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Augusta Avenue – Review of cut-through traffic and a request for speed control measures. A number of residents reached out to the Town regarding Augusta Avenue, which has been reviewed by the Amherst Traffic Safety Board on many occasions. Augusta is a residential street with a parking restriction on the entire west side. The main reason the street appears so often before the Board is because it lines up directly across from the Walmart parking lot entry on Sheridan Drive and is a convenient cut through for individuals going to and from nearby businesses. Multiple traffic studies have been completed along with traffic counts requested by the Town, and Chris Schregel displays slides on the screen showing that traffic volume and speeds have not fluctuated significantly over the years of counting. A complete closure of Augusta was proposed at one time but was not well received by area residents. Current residents would like speed humps considered, but Chairman Fraas responds that there is no evidence of excessive speeding based on the collected speeds, making this street an unlikely candidate for speed humps. Discussion from the members ensues regarding why there is a parking restriction on one side of Augusta. Jennifer Michniewicz suggests removing the parking restriction or blocking off the street as possible solutions. Hold for discussion with a full board in November and research why the parking restriction is in place.
2. Tonawanda Creek Road – Speeding concerns. Chris Schregel begins by explaining that the resident broaching this item lives in the 50 mph section of Tonawanda Creek Road, but close to the section of road that changes to 45 mph just before the 25 mph curve advisory section. He is questioning why it is signed 50 mph in his section of road, preferring that the 45 mph speed limit be extended to include the road section upon which he lives. A few years ago Erie County was asked if they would be in support of lowering the speed limit, but in response to 2017 counts indicating 85th percentile speeds east-bound of 53 mph, and west-bound of 54 mph, they did not support the lowering of the speed limit. Item received and filed.
3. Glen Oak Drive and Smith Road Intersection – Request for a crosswalk and/or other signage to assist pedestrians crossing Smith Road. Chris Schregel begins by explaining that a resident reached out to the Town asking for the intersection of Glen Oak and Smith Road be considered for a mid-block crosswalk. There is adequate sight distance at this location to install a crosswalk,

and there is a pool/recreation area that area residents walk and bike to on a regular basis to justify installation. At present, the intersection is currently stop controlled on Glen Oak, and Smith Road is a County road that was recently paved with striping to be completed sometime in the fall. Due to overlapping Town/County jurisdictions, a crosswalk cannot be installed at the same time as the fog line since a crosswalk would be a Town responsibility that must be installed through a permit from the County.

Chairman Fraas opens up the public comment period:

- a) Colleen Daumen, 418 Glen Oak Drive. She opens by pointing out that Smith Road is a heavily used County road, and would like to begin the process of crosswalk installation to improve safety for pedestrians. She comments that this is a high volume pedestrian area and would like something done to slow traffic, which she feels a crosswalk would accomplish.

Chris Schregel shares the latest relevant data, which shows the average daily volume on Smith Road is 3000 vehicles/day; two accidents have been recorded in the past three years; and speeding has been occurring mostly in the north westerly direction with an 85th percentile speed of 44 mph against a posted speed limit of 35 mph.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period for this item and opens the discussion to the members. Jennifer Michniewicz supports providing crosswalks as long as they can be placed in sensible locations with the correct signage. Chairman Fraas has concerns with an uncontrolled crosswalk because of the high recorded speed, yet feels it would bring attention to the intersection and could be beneficial to slowing vehicles. After some discussion, it is determined that signage and striping would be the Town's responsibility to post and maintain. Chairman Fraas is in favor of referring this to Highway to apply for the necessary permits and install the crosswalk and signage. Members agree.

4. Mt. Vernon Road and Saratoga Road – Safety concerns. Chris Schregel states that a resident brought this item to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board's attention, asking for improved safety at this intersection as people are frequently running the stop sign. Located two blocks from Amherst Middle School, Saratoga Park and Amherst Nursery School, this is currently an all-way stop intersection with sidewalks and ADA ramps at each corner. Chairman Fraas opens up the public comment period:

- a) Matt Norman, 376 Mt. Vernon. He lives at this corner and mentions a number of points:
- he has witnessed vehicles going through the stop sign on numerous occasions
 - police enforcement is non-existent
 - this is a very high pedestrian traffic area with residents walking and biking
 - numerous children from the nearby schools travelling through the intersection on foot or bike
 - this area has long blocks that provide the opportunity for drivers to gather speed.

He would like to know what steps are needed to make this intersection safer.

- b) Andrew Kirshmeyer, 385 Mt. Vernon. He also lives in close proximity to this intersection, and brings up these points:
- mentions an accident in which a vehicle ended up on a lawn
 - comments on the number of children walking in this area every day
 - evenings and rush hours are especially dangerous.

He would like a lower speed limit or some other type of traffic calming measure to make this a safer intersection.

- c) Scott Smith, 256 Saratoga Road. He has lived in this neighborhood for 23 years, and remarks:
- the stop sign non-compliance has increased in the past few years
 - wonders if stop lines and crosswalks could be placed at every leg of the intersection
 - a number of e-bikes at this intersection running the stop sign, pointing out that they are silent and speedy, making them especially vulnerable to accidents and serious injury.
- d) Bill Schwab, 360 Mt. Vernon. Has been a Mt. Vernon resident for 37 years, and has noticed the neighborhood changing over the past few years to younger families. He remarks that the issues of speeding and stop sign non-compliance have been an on-going problem. He would like some type of solution from the Amherst Traffic Safety Board to improve the problems at this intersection.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the item up for Board discussion by explaining that the problem with this intersection is that it's an unwarranted all-way stop. He goes on to say that one solution would be to remove the stop signs on either the Mt. Vernon or Saratoga Road approaches, depending on which is the major leg. He cautions, however, that stop sign removal is never a popular solution with area residents and is rarely implemented. Kevin Cantwell states that this is an old neighborhood and most of the intersections in the general area are four-way stops that had been adopted years ago without any type of study.

A resident asks if a School Zone could be established in this section seeing as the Amherst Nursery School is nearby at Saratoga and Harlem Road. Chris Schregel informs the resident that it could be investigated, but would have to meet certain criteria.

Dan Rider suggests adding speed humps and removing the stop signs on Saratoga to slow the speeds. Councilmember Szukala reminds the Board that Highway Superintendent Patrick Lucey is not in favor of speed humps for a number of reasons.

Chairman Fraas suggests as a first step referring this item to Highway for traffic and speed counts in order to determine the major and minor leg of this intersection. Hold waiting for counts.

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. Bill A1007A – Mapping and updates. Chris Schregel opens the discussion by saying that the Amherst Traffic Safety Board asked for GIS mapping of all the speed limits in the Town in order to send to the Town Board the information they need to determine if 30 mph signage should be lowered to 25 mph -- those maps are in the process of being completed. By way of summary, Chairman Fraas explains the new Bill by stating that it gives municipalities the ability to lower the speed limit to 25 mph – previously, the lowest speed for a local roadway was 30 mph, excluding school zones and advisory signage. Councilmember Szukala reinforces that the Town of Amherst now has the option of lowering current speed limits to 25 mph or keeping it as is. He reached out to surrounding communities and discovered that Amherst neighbors have no plans to lower speed limits due to non-compliance with the current 30 mph speed limit. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:
- a) Thomas Frank, 5403 Main Street. Tom discusses walkability in the Town and the Village, the improvements of trails, sanitary sewer system and storm water system through grants and other funds.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the Board discussion by reminding the members that at the last meeting a motion was passed by a vote of 5-1 approving a statutory speed limit of 25 mph on local roads. Chris Schregel informs the members that a resolution will be presented to the Town Board for action. A discussion ensues related to changing all affected signs from 30 mph to 25 mph. Jennifer Michniewicz comments other signage throughout the Town would need to be changed such as school speed zones and advisory signage. Chris Schregel informs the members he will move forward with drafting a resolution with a GIS link that would indicate all streets that would go from 30 mph to 25 mph so the Town Board and the public are able to visualize the impact of this change.

- B. Washington / Westmoreland intersections – Held for pedestrian study. Chris Schregel begins by saying this is the crosswalk request which had accompanied the school speed zone request recently before the Board. The Engineering Department conducted a pedestrian count which indicated that 50 pedestrians were counted in a half hour timeframe. A Type-S crosswalk is currently at all four legs of this intersection, but the resident is requesting that Type-LS High Visibility striping replace the current striping. Chairman Fraas mentions that those particular nearby intersections that received the High-Visibility striping had it installed to alleviate cars standing within the intersections as they queued for Amherst Middle School pick-up/drop-off. The Traffic Safety Board recommends that Type S remain the standard unless there is a specific situation, like at the Middle School, that calls for emphatic striping to highlight the crosswalk. After discussion, the members choose not to change the current striping. Receive and File.
- C. Allenhurst / Cambridge – Held for traffic counts.
- D. St. Gregory Court / Bassett Road – Pedestrian count results. Chris Schregel begins by reviewing the requested pedestrian count results, which revealed that during the peak St. Gregory the Great school dismissal time, five people crossed in the general area of the curve. Also revealed were a number of vehicles queued in the 'No Parking' area waiting to pick up children. Chris Schregel suggests having this section examined for possible design changes at the same time the Youngs Road flashing beacon project is being designed. Members agree, received and filed.

Chairman Fraas asks if anyone has any additional new or old business to bring before the Board. Kevin Cantwell would like to inform the members that the past problems at school pick-up and drop-off times at Smallwood Elementary School and Amherst Middle School have improved and no longer seem to be an issue.

Chairman Fraas would like to know the status of Miovision, to which Chris Schregel responds the project is moving forward. Specifically, smart signals have been deployed all along Maple Road and Wehrle Drive, adjustments and signal coordination with the NYSDOT being arranged. Continuing the smart signals project in the entire Town was recently approved by the Town Board.

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 Retail/Restaurant Building and Office Building – Patio and Drive up ATM Additions and Walkway Revisions
ADDRESS: 305 Crosspoint Parkway
PETITIONER: Uniland Development

X MAJOR SITE PLAN REVIEW IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITION

1. Provide sidewalks across all driveways within the public right-of-way.
2. Install a crosswalk and acceptable Pedestrian Access Route (PAR) from the public sidewalk to the building entrance. As shown, the pedestrian connection drops pedestrians in the parking lot without a clearly marked PAR to enter the building. Shift either the access aisle or the landscaped island directly across the proposed sidewalk coming from the public sidewalk, and complete the connection using a crosswalk.
3. Provide a supplemental letter from the Traffic Engineer with a sight distance analysis specific to the center curb cut.

SUBJECT: Proposed Dental School Parking and Sidewalk Waiver
ADDRESS: 2525 Kensington Ave.
PETITIONER: Philipps bros. Supply Inc.

X MAJOR SITE PLAN REVIEW IS
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

Meeting ended at 9:30 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher P. Schregel
Traffic Safety Coordinator