

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

June 14, 2023

The June meeting of the Amherst Traffic Safety Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on June 14, 2023, Chairman Eric Fraas presiding. He opens the first order of business, asking if any changes or corrections are needed to the May 3, 2023 meeting minutes. Jennifer Michniewicz would like one change, under new business, Item 1, introductory paragraph, second line from the bottom, after "66' wide right of way", a comma should replace the period. Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Dan Rider, to approve the minutes as corrected. Approved 8-0. Members in attendance are Chairman Eric Fraas, Vice-Chairman Greg Dionne, Dan Rider, Kevin Cantwell, Maxwell Kahn, Ken Smith, Jennifer Michniewicz, Mark Storch and Kristin Goss (arrived late). Departmental Liaisons included Thomas Voigt of the Planning Department, Bill Prenevau of the Building Department, Captain Kevin Brown of the Police Department, and Chris Schregel of the Engineering Department/Traffic Safety Coordinator. Also in attendance was Councilmember Michael Szukala, Town Board Liaison to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board. Guest list is on record at the Town's Engineering Department.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Kensington Avenue – Speeding concerns. Chris Schregel opens the discussion by saying a resident has brought speeding issues on Kensington Avenue to the Traffic Safety Board's attention along with a report of a recent bike/vehicle accident. A few years ago, a road diet was implemented on Kensington Avenue to address safety and speeding concerns while retaining the 35 mph speed limit. Studies were conducted before the road diet construction, then again more recently to gather before-and-after comparison data. While the studies did not show significant speed reduction, the number of accidents has been reduced by half, greatly improving overall safety. Chairman Fraas leads off the Board discussion by reminding everyone that drivers tend to drive at the speeds at which they feel comfortable. Kevin Cantwell points out that should the County be presented with these studies, they might very well recommend raising the speed limit to 40 mph based on the data, which is probably not the outcome the resident was seeking for this residential neighborhood. He then remarks that he lives in this area and has noticed a change for the better in the traffic and accident history since the road diet was completed. Chairman Fraas asks if the members would like to act on this item or Receive and File. Receive and file, approved 8-0.
2. Hampton Hill Drive – Pedestrian safety & speed concerns. Chris Schregel begins with a brief profile of Hampton Hill Drive, saying it's an entirely residential road adjacent to Brompton running north/south between Sheridan Drive and Main Street. The posted speed limit is 30 mph with 28-foot wide pavement. It was intentionally designed with curves to slow traffic, but does not have sidewalks. A resident contacted the Town with pedestrian safety concerns, asking for better enforcement of the speed limit and more signage to improve safety for walkers and bicyclists. Speed and volume counts have been conducted showing just over 1,000 vehicles per day travelling at an 85th percentile speed of 28 mph one way and 30 mph the other. No accidents involving pedestrians, bikes or vehicles have been reported between 2017-2021.

Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item, but the residents present opt to defer speaking at this time. Chairman Fraas then opens the discussion to the members, Kevin Cantwell leading off by asking how it was this street was designed with no sidewalks in mind, to which Chris Schregel responds that sidewalks were not required when this neighborhood was constructed and installing them now would be very difficult due to the number of obstructions that currently occupy the right-of-way. Chairman Fraas points out that speed is not the issue on Hampton Hill -- rather the main concern is pedestrian safety due to the lack of sidewalks. Dan Rider agrees that speeding is not a problem on Hampton Hill, but he is concerned with drivers not seeing pedestrians along the curves. Chairman Fraas suggests painting fog lines on the street to create a safer walking area but admits doing so around the center islands could be troublesome due to space constriction. Residents present ask to speak at this time:

- a) Eileen Leary, 73 Hampton Hill. She presents several observations:
 - she notices traffic slows when vehicles are parked on the road
 - when traffic comes up the hill from Sheridan Drive, the cars are driving at a high speed and then when they reach the curve they will move into the oncoming lane
 - some of the traffic is cut through traffic
 - although the study did not show excessive speeds, some vehicles are nonetheless traveling at high speeds.
- b) Susan Herzog, 65 Hampton Hill. She walks often with her dog and has had issues with vehicles traveling at inappropriate speeds. She would like to see occasional Police enforcement.

Chairman Fraas comments that the solution to the problems on Hampton Hill would be the installation of sidewalks but residents would likely resist this remedy as it would involve tree removal and change the overall character of the neighborhood. The members are asked if they would like to pursue fog lines:

Greg Dionne - Receive and File

Dan Rider would like to see a striping plan formulated

Jennifer Michniewicz - Receive and File

Ken Smith - Receive and File

Kevin Cantwell - Receive and File

Max Kahn - Receive and File

Mark Storch - Receive and File

Chairman Fraas - Receive and File

This item is received and filed.

3. Westfield Road – Review speed hump concept. Chris Schregel begins by stating that DiDonato Associates is the Town's Design Engineer for traffic calming, and they have recommended three (3) speed humps on Westfield Road, with accompanying signage displayed on the screen: the first speed hump is proposed at 86 Westfield, the second at 139 Westfield, and the third at 209 Westfield. The discussion is opened to the members for recommendations and comments. Greg Dionne inquires if the residents have had any input regarding the installation of the speed humps, to which Chris Schregel responds that the Highway Department sent letters out to area residents asking for feedback. Chris Schregel then mentions that before-and-after data is being collected on Westfield Road. The members request that before-and-after data also be collected on Ivyhurst Road to gauge the degree of traffic diversion after the speed humps are installed. Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Jennifer Michniewicz, to proceed with the installation of three speed humps as proposed by the consultant. Approved 9-0. Captain Brown has concerns regarding the number of future speed hump requests that may result should this experiment prove successful. Chris Schregel explains that if the use of speed humps is found to be favorable, a criterion will be established.

4. North Forest & Klein Road Traffic Signal - Request right turn overlaps for westbound Klein Road. Chris Schregel begins by saying that this item was brought up at the last meeting by Chairman Fraas. This intersection is signalized with the southbound lefts given a protected left turn arrow. Chairman Fraas is questioning if it would be better for traffic flow efficiency if the westbound rights were given a green arrow to proceed rather than using the right-on-red system. Currently the traffic signal is not equipped to provide a red right arrow. Accident history shows six (6) accidents with only one (1) due to a right-on-red. Jennifer Michniewicz likes this request and would like to add pedestrian signals. Chris Schregel explains that funding is available for pedestrian related additions at intersections, then suggests that the right turn arrow could perhaps be added to a pedestrian safety project. Motion by Kevin Cantwell, second from Dan Rider, to install the pedestrian heads at the crosswalk and the installation of a protected right turn phase. Approved 8-1 (Storch).
5. Willow Green Drive – Request for an all-way stop. Chris Schregel begins by explaining this item is in reference to Willow Green Drive at the intersection of Bedford, located in the neighborhood behind Willow Ridge School and in close proximity to a Town Park. The resident is concerned with the speeds on Willow Green and is asking for an all-way stop at Willow Green and Bedford. He is also asking that consideration be given to adding a “Cross Traffic Does Not Stop” sub-plaque. In addition, he is requesting a playground sign. Willow Green Drive is a residential Town road with sidewalks on both sides, with a number of duplexes in this area. Counts were conducted just south of this intersection indicating low vehicle volume and 85th percentile speeds of 32 and 33 mph in the north and south direction against a posted speed limit of 30 mph. This intersection has no reported crash history in the last 5 years. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:
 - a) Sal Guadagna, 269 Willow Green Drive. Mr. Guadagna presents a number of observations and requests:
 - has lived in this neighborhood for over 20 years and knows the traffic patterns of the neighborhood
 - has often witnessed speeds exceeding 40 MPH
 - would like an all-way stop on the corner of Bedford Court and Willow Green to break up the speeds
 - would like to see a lower speed limit
 - would like the addition of speed bumps
 - explains there are other areas in this neighborhood that also would benefit from stop sign installations
 - remarks that most of the intersections in this neighborhood are all-way stop intersections and doesn’t understand why the one at Willow Green and Bedford is not.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period for this item and opens the Board discussion by explaining to the resident that stop signs are not meant to be speed control devices. He then reviews the warrants that are needed to install an all-way stop and informs Mr. Guadagna that Willow Green will not meet the criteria. Addressing speed bumps, Chairman Fraas explains that installing them on Willow Green would probably not be the best option based on the recorded volume and speeds. He concludes by informing the resident that the lowest speed limit Town may post is 30 mph, but this could change due to new laws that have been passed in New York State which allow lowering the speed limit to 25 mph -- this change is still being reviewed.

Chairman Fraas asks if any members would like to consider this intersection for a “Cross Traffic Does Not Stop” sub plaque. Roll Call:

Dionne – Yes

Cantwell – Yes

Rider – Yes
Fraas – No
Michniewicz – No
Kahn – Yes
Storch – No
Smith – No

At 4-4, the addition of a "Cross Traffic Does Not Stop" sign is not recommended.

Chairman Fraas makes a motion, second by Greg Dionne, to install advanced playground signs in appropriate locations on Willow Green. Approved 8-0. Highway to be sent a request.

Chris Schregel would like to discuss the addition of an uncontrolled mid-block crosswalk at this location, pointing out that it could provide a level of protection for individuals crossing in this area. Kevin Cantwell would like a pedestrian count to see if a crosswalk is warranted -- Chairman Fraas suggests holding off on the count until the playground installation is completed. Chairman Fraas would also like to consider adding another crosswalk at the other end of the playground area on Kaymar Drive. Item held until the playground has been completed.

6. Youngs / Klein – Southbound left split failure and turn arrow investigation. Chairman Fraas begins the conversation by saying that this intersection has a protected turn phase on Klein Road for traffic heading east, and a protected left turn on to Youngs Road headed north. The signal timing seems accurate, although left hand turn vehicles have difficulty making the turn to Klein Road from Youngs Road. He would like a protected turn phase on Youngs Road turning on to Klein Road in the southbound direction. Based on counts it was found that the turn phase is not warranted, but the accident history showed this intersection had 3.5 times higher number of accidents than the State average. Additionally, a recent traffic study asked that consideration be given to a left turn arrow based on the number of reported accidents. However, Miovision did not show a need to make any modification to this signal. Maxwell Khan would like to see the left-hand arrow added. Motion by Maxwell Khan, second by Mark Storch, to install protected turning phases on all legs of the intersection. Approved 9-0.
7. Clarion Court – Request for a parking restriction. (Withdrawn)
8. Hartford Road – Speeding concerns. Chris Schregel begins by pointing out that Hartford Road has an all-way stop at Imperial and no accidents related to speed have been recorded on Hartford. A counter placed at the location displayed on the screen showed 2,832 vehicles eastbound with an 85th percentile speed of 33 mph, and 613 vehicles westbound with an 85th percentile speed of 33 mph. Residents from this neighborhood are asking for an all-way stop or some type of speed control. Ken Smith would like to add that there is a parking restriction on the north side of Hartford for the entire length. Chairman Fraas comments that the traffic count indicates that vehicles are cutting through Hartford to get to the thruway. Jennifer Michniewicz offers a reason why, commenting that the timing is too short during the left turn phase on Sheridan and the stacking lane is not long enough to accommodate the vehicles that didn't make the signal plus new vehicles in queue -- to avoid these frustrations, drivers seek other paths with Hartford Road serving as an easy alternative. Chairman Fraas would like this referred to the NYSDOT to determine if there is enough road width on Sheridan Drive to have two left turning lanes northbound on to Millersport Highway, ultimately relieving the traffic pressure on Hartford Road. Refer to NYSDOT to review the timing of the intersection to see if any improvements can be made to the left-hand turning movements.

Chairman Fraas asks if there is any other new business. None being heard, the New Business portion of the meeting is closed. Chairman Fraas opens Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Muegel Road – Resident survey - Held
- B. Romney / Consumer Square – Request for an all-way stop. Chris Schregel reminds the Traffic Safety Board that they reviewed this item earlier this year when Benderson Development requested converting the intersection of Romney Road and the TJM Plaza-Consumer Square pass through to an all-way stop with a crosswalk. The Board denied this request for a number of reasons. Since then, an all-warrant analysis was done that indicated this intersection did meet the warrants for an all-way stop and further suggested mitigation to prevent the queuing lengths that the Traffic Safety Board was concerned about. Benderson is proposing a complete change at the intersection, displayed on screen, which includes the addition of a dedicated left turn lane, a through right lane, and a northbound right turn lane to improve the queuing/stacking length. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment for this item:
- a) Matt Oates, Benderson Development. He begins by affirming that warrants have been met for an all-way stop. No widening of the intersection is needed, just some modifications. Benderson feels that adding dedicated left turn lanes, removing a bulb-out, adding dedicated through lanes and adding appropriate pavement markings will help the intersection perform better and improve pedestrian safety.

Chairman Fraas has concerns with the next intersection on Romney having the same issues since it is also an uncontrolled intersection. Greg Dionne has some issues with the bulb-out removal as it might cause vehicle conflict. Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Greg Dionne, to recommend this design to the Town Board with the installation of an all-way stop sign as part of the design with changes to the westbound approach as discussed. Benderson to modify the plan west of this intersection. Approved 9-0.

Chairmen Fraas asks if there is any other old business. Kevin Cantwell would like to discuss the Shatkin building at Kensington and East Bentham. He has noticed that the large bush has not been modified to improve the sight distance looking west on to Kensington, something that was supposed to have been taken care of when this location was last discussed by this Board. This will be reviewed and reported on at the next meeting.

Chairmen Fraas asks if there is any other old business. None being heard, New and Old Business is closed.

SITE PLANS / REZONING

SUBJECT: Proposed Vehicle Use Area Revisions
ADDRESS: 3860 Main Street and 3834 Main Street
PETITIONER: Sisters of St. Francis Of Holy Name Province Inc.

X MINOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

SUBJECT: Proposed Commerce Center – Office Building
ADDRESS: 4200, 4224 (Portion) & 4228-4230 Ridge Lea Road
4224 (Portion), 4252-4258 Ridge Lea Road and 280
(Portion) & 306 Meyer Road
4224 (Portion) Ridge Lea Road and 256, 270 & 280
(Portion) Meyer Road
PETITIONER: Amherst Portfolio Equities

X MAJOR SITE PLAN IS
X DENIED

1. Town's independent traffic impact study for the Amherst Commerce Center / Boulevard Central District indicates that the east leg of the Romney Road / N. Bailey intersection requires separate westbound left, through, and right turn lanes to properly mitigate a failing level of service in both the PM and Saturday peaks. Modify the plan to indicate three lanes exiting this site driveway.

SUBJECT: Proposed Commercial Plaza – Building and Parking Addition
ADDRESS: 1401-1405 Niagara Falls Boulevard
PETITIONER: Benderson Development Company

X MINOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

- 1) Make improvements along the overly-wide Niagara Falls Blvd (NFB) curb cut to narrow and improve pedestrian accommodations between the sidewalks to the north and south.
- 2) Similarly, make improvements along the overly-wide Meyer Road curb cut to narrow and improve pedestrian accommodations between the sidewalks to the west and east. Consider complete closure given close proximity to the NFB intersection.
- 3) Pursue a parking lot connection with 1395 NFB at the west parking lot similar to connection at the east parking lot.
- 4) Provide a pedestrian connection between the Meyer Road public sidewalk and the sidewalk proposed adjacent to the addition.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for August 2, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher P. Schregel
Traffic Safety Coordinator