

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 4, 2023

The October meeting of the Amherst Traffic Safety Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on October 4, 2023, Chairman Eric Fraas presiding. He opens the first order of business by informing the members that the September minutes have not been distributed and will be reviewed at the November meeting. Members in attendance are Chairman Eric Fraas, Greg Dionne, Dan Rider, Kevin Cantwell, Ken Smith, Jennifer Michniewicz, Mark Storch, Maxwell Kahn and Patrick Wanamaker. Departmental liaisons included Thomas Voigt of the Planning Department, Captain Kevin Brown of the Police Department, Chris Schregel, Traffic Safety Coordinator/Engineering Liaison, and Councilman 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. North Ellicott Creek Road – Request for full access onto North Ellicott Creek Road from the Essex Woods Development. Chris Schregel introduces this item by saying the Town was contacted by several residents pointing out that the development they are living in does not have full vehicular access onto North Ellicott Creek Road. There is an emergency gate in place for use by emergency vehicles, but aside from that Sweet Home Road is the only access road available when entering or exiting the development. This is a serious concern for the residents since Sweet Home is a four-lane highway with heavy volume. Vehicles queueing at the signal are often backed up past the entry curb-cut, which makes basic access difficult – indeed, there has been one rear-end accident involving a resident waiting their turn to enter the development. They would like to be able to enter and exit the development through North Ellicott Creek Road, and otherwise take advantage of the benefits afforded by the signalized intersection.

Tom Voigt provides further background on this item, explaining that in 2016 this site was rezoned to multi-family housing. The Town Board placed a condition on the rezoning to ensure that no access or driveway would ever come from the back parcel to North Ellicott Creek Road, memorialized in a deed restriction which only permitted access via Sweet Home Road. During the site plan review, however, the Fire Inspector required another access to the site due to fire code requirements for the number of units, so the Town Board amended the deed restriction allowing a gated entrance out to N. Ellicott Creek Road for emergency-use only. Tom then informs everyone there is a process to alter the deed and remove the restriction, which would allow removal of the emergency gate and open that access way for resident-use:

1. The owner submits an application for relief of the restriction.
2. The application would then go before the Planning Board and be reviewed by the Town departments.
3. The Town Board authorizes an amendment for relief from the deed restriction.

Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

- a) Gary Klenk, 18C Essex Wood Lane. He begins by saying he moved into the Essex Development on May 14th and on the 16th of May his wife was in an accident entering their development when she was rear-ended by another vehicle. He goes on to say he has lived in Amherst all his life and traveled on Sweet Home Road for many years and observes that Sweet Home Road has changed dramatically. His wife's accident demonstrates how dangerous pulling into his development is, especially at peak hours. With regards to the residents of N. Ellicott Creek Road, he points out they would not be affected if the emergency entrance was opened since their homes are situated far back from the road. He is asking for a safe access driveway in and out of the development.
- b) Joanne Klenk, 18C Essex Wood Lane. She was rear ended 2 days after moving into the development, and now worries whenever she is entering the development from Sweet Home Road. She understands the restrictions caused by the deed but is not sure why this was originally implemented. She would like to have more than one way to exit and enter the development.
- c) Lori McCoy, 11C Essex Wood Lane. She has lived in Essex Woods for three years and she loves Buffalo and the surrounding community. She works downtown and drives in and out of the development using area streets often. She and her husband were one of the first residents in the development, and in those earlier days they were able to use the exit onto N. Ellicott Creek Road and were safe using the traffic signal at Sweet Home Road. Now that the development has grown and has several more residents, the Ellicott Creek driveway has been turned into an emergency entrance and is no longer accessible to anyone living in the Essex Development. She has witnessed accidents, high speeds and drivers running the red light on Sweet Home Road. She also mentions that the garbage, recycling and delivery trucks are put at risk because of the single access road.

Chairman Fraas next reads an e-mail from Jeffrey Grossberg, a resident unable to attend the meeting, which makes the following points:

- there is no reason for the restriction to Ellicott Creek since it's easily accessed from Sweet Home Road
- traffic from Sweet Home Road is ending up on N. Ellicott Creek Road anyway
- it makes more sense to just have full access to N. Ellicott Creek Road from what is now the emergency access entrance
- during peak volume times exiting the development would be much safer at a signalized intersection
- emphasizes the danger and difficulty exiting onto Sweet Home
- would like this deed restriction lifted before someone is seriously injured.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period for this item and opens the discussion to the members. Maxwell Kahn sees no reason why the emergency gate shouldn't be removed and the development allowed access to N. Ellicott Creek Road, but reminds everyone that Essex Homes, as the property owner, has the final say whether this emergency access can be altered. He is in favor of lifting the deed restriction and thinks that Essex Homes most likely would not have an issue with this change, but he worries that at the Town Board level residents living on N. Ellicott Creek might be in opposition. Chairman Fraas feels the N. Ellicott Creek Road is the safer choice for access, then explains that Essex Homes will need to petition to lift the deed restriction, but if they decide to go forward with the removal of the gated access, the revised site plans should include a revised driveway with acceptable turning radius

and two-lane traffic lanes. Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Maxwell Kahn, for the removal of the emergency access deed restriction. Before the vote, Dan Rider offers the results of his own 37-second traffic count, during which time he counted 42 vehicles in both directions on Sweet Home Road with only 1 vehicle on N. Ellicott Creek Road – he remarks that his brief study demonstrates there is much lower traffic volume on N. Ellicott Creek Road, which would make it the safer choice for an exit driveway from this development. Motion approved 9-0. Recommendation to be provided to Essex Homes and the motion to be kept on file if the site comes back to the Town for Site Plan review.

2. Ayer Road – Request for a solid double yellow center lines between Maple Road and Sheridan Drive. Chris Schregel provides the background, saying this section of Ayer Road between Sheridan and Maple is a residential two-lane Town roadway having a posted speed limit of 35 mph, with passing zones on much of the road. Recently a new subdivision with 17 lots was added to this section. Counts were done by the GBNRTC in 2014 indicating that 3566 vehicles were traveling on Ayer Road with an 85th percentile speed of 38 mph. Two accidents have been reported in the past three years in this area but neither accident was caused by illegal passing. The resident broaching this item stated that numerous children and some elderly individuals live in this area, and she would like to implement a double yellow line to prevent passing for the safety of the neighborhood. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item.
 - a) Pam Barciniak, 171 Ayer Road. She begins by saying speeding is prevalent on Ayer Road and she becomes very disturbed when drivers pass the school buses after their flashing lights have been deployed. She is very concerned for the safety of her grandchildren along with all the children in the area with all the high-speed passing – to address this, she would like a double yellow no passing line to improve safety.
 - b) Drew Brownson, 179 Ayer Road. He sees his children on and off the school bus daily, and regularly witnesses vehicles passing the school bus at high speeds. Mr. Brownson informs the members that the Williamsville School District recently changed the bus policy so that children do not have to cross the street when getting on and off the bus. This change was made to address dangerous conditions caused by that sort of unsafe driving.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the discussion to the members. Greg Dionne voices support for the residents' request and is in favor of installing a double yellow line. Chairman Fraas and Kevin Cantwell also agree with the request. Motion by Greg Dionne, second by Kevin Cantwell, to refer to the Highway Department for the installation of a double yellow line. Dan Rider would like to know when Ayer Road is scheduled to be paved, to which Al Spoth responds that he does not have the scheduling handy. Motion for the installation of a double yellow line on Ayer Road approved 9-0.

3. Getzville Road – Request for pedestrian crosswalks at current stop intersections and additional traffic calming. Chris Schregel introduces this item by saying that Getzville Road is a residential roadway running between Main Street and Sheridan Drive parallel to Harlem Road, terminating slightly west of Amherst High School. Several side streets run off Getzville Road, and it is also used as an access road to Daemen University. Traffic data posted by the GBNRTC in 2020 indicated 2,000 vehicles per day travelling in both directions. Counts conducted in 2014, however, showed about 4,000 vehicles - this large drop in vehicle volume could have been an effect of Covid. The 85th percentile speed from 2014 came in at 36 mph, but in the 2020 study during Covid the 85th percentile increased to 38 mph, likely due to the reduced traffic. The stop signs on Getzville Road are located at Meadowstream Road in the northbound direction and Woodbury Drive in the southbound direction, but neither of these intersections are all-way stop intersections. Chris Schregel adds that, to his knowledge, those stop signs were placed for speed control years ago, a policy no longer followed by the Town. Speeding complaints

continue to be received by the Town regarding Getzville Road, and crash data revealed several vehicular accidents and one pedestrian accident involving a bike. Getzville Road has sidewalks on both sides of the street except for the west side between Elmhurst and Main Street. Elmhurst Road has a mid-block crosswalk with ADA accommodations which was installed as part of the Daemen University parking lot project. The resident that contacted the Town is asking for slower speeds, traffic calming measures, more crosswalks, the addition of a stop sign, and a more pedestrian friendly environment. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

- a) Andrew Wierzbieniec, 81 Snyderwoods. He has much to say regarding the pedestrian unfriendliness of Getzville Road from Sheridan Drive to the new crosswalk:
- lack of pedestrian striping or ADA accessibility that would facilitate pedestrians crossing Getzville Road
 - when crossing the street with a stroller, he needs to find driveways on both sides of the street that can accommodate the wheels
 - some of the side streets don't have sidewalks which forces him to walk in the street with his stroller
 - Getzville Road feels like a county road in the middle of a neighborhood
 - Getzville Road has no curbing or road markings making it very unsafe for pedestrians
 - observes there are two Town parks close by, but people have no safe way to cross Getzville Road and access them
 - the two existing crosswalks are not in proximity to the paths children are using to access the parks
 - he is requesting more pedestrian friendly infrastructure.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the Board discussion by acknowledging the stop signs are poorly placed and mentions the obvious solution of removing some of them, but remarks that the likely resident backlash makes this a poor proposition. Chairman Fraas adds that new crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections are not safe for the pedestrians. Jennifer Michniewicz suggests adding a stop sign to help eliminate driver confusion. Greg Dionne would like to see a crosswalk with all updated ADA ramps added to Greenbrier Road as this location seems to be most suitable with an existing stop sign and space to add the ADA compliant ramp. The ensuing discussion among the members leads to the following motions:

Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Jennifer Michniewicz, for the relocation of the stop sign on Getzville Road southbound at Woodbury to the intersection of Getzville and Greenbrier Road. Approved 9-0.

Motion by Jennifer Michniewicz, second by Chairman Fraas, for the installation of a crosswalk at Greenbrier Road across Getzville Road on the southern leg of the intersection along with any necessary ADA ramps and signage. Approved 9-0.

Motion by Greg Dionne, second by Jennifer Michniewicz, to relocate the stop sign at Meadowstream Drive and Getzville Road to the southern intersection of Woodbury Drive and Getzville Road making this an all-way stop and converting the Meadowstream intersection into a single-way stop on the east leg. Approved 9-0

Councilmember Szukala will be asked by the Amherst Traffic Safety Board to sponsor a resolution which covers these points to bring before the Town Board since a public hearing and Town Board action will be necessary to implement these changes. History shows that in general, residents do not like relocating stop signs, and as such the Town Board will be given information to explain why the changes suggested by the Traffic Safety Board make sense for this section of Getzville Road. If approved by the Town Board, the Highway Department will

post the stop signs as indicated in the resolution. The Highway Department makes the final determination about the installation of crosswalks.

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

OLD BUSINESS

A. New Road – Hold for plans from the County.

Chairmen Fraas asks if there is any other old business.

Chris Schregel would like to inform the members that Item 4 from September (Brantwood and Kings Highway intersection) will be added to the Old Business in November. He also will be adding Prestonwood and Casey to the Old Business in November. Sweet Home and Emerson will be held until Miovision counts can be done during the school year -- those counts will be completed when time permits.

Chairman Fraas asks if Andrew Wierzbieniec can be notified and asked to fill out a sidewalk request for the completion of a small section of sidewalk on Copper Heights, to which Chris Schregel responds that the residents from this neighborhood will all be notified and asked if they are in favor of adding this section of sidewalk before any installation is begun. Since this section is already on the list of Town sidewalk additions, Mr. Wierzbieniec will not need to fill out a request.

Chairman Fraas asks if there is any other old or new business. None being heard, the Old and New Business portions of the meeting are closed.

SITE PLANS / REZONING

SUBJECT: Proposed Mixed – Apartment Building
ADDRESS: 3945 Rensch Road
PETITIONER: Rensch Group LLC

X MAJOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITION

- 1) Remove linework on the plan indicating an existing curb cut on the west side of Rensch Road.

SUBJECT: Proposed Raymore & Flanigan Plaza - Restaurant
ADDRESS: 1459 Niagara Falls Boulevard
PETITIONER: Mission BBQ Amherst NY LLC

X MINOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

- 1) Remove the south curb cut onto Niagara Falls Blvd. within the work limits.
- 2) Install a public sidewalk along Niagara Falls Blvd. within the work limits.
- 3) Install a sidewalk connection between the proposed building and the public sidewalk referenced in comment #2.

SUBJECT: Proposed Tier III Solar Energy System & 3-Lot Subdivision
ADDRESS: 1050 New Road
PETITIONER: Ned – New Energy Solar 8 LLC

X MAJOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

- 1) Private driveway must be paved.

SUBJECT: Proposed Boulevard Consumer Square – Romney Road & Plaza Driveway
ADDRESS: 1565, 1575-1659 & 1641-1703 Niagara Falls Boulevard
PETITIONER: Benderson Development Company

X MINOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

SUBJECT: North Bailey Fire Company
ADDRESS: 966 Sweet Home Road
PETITIONER: North Bailey Fire Company

X MINOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher P. Schregel
Traffic Safety Coordinator