

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

January 10, 2024

The January meeting of the Amherst Traffic Safety Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on January 10, 2024, Acting Chairman Eric Fraas presiding. He opens the meeting by stating that two members present have not been reinstated for the year 2024 and as such will not be entitled to vote on any of the items at today's meeting. He explains that because of this, the Board currently does not have enough members present to vote on any item at all. The first order of business is asking if any changes or corrections are needed to the December 6, 2023 meeting minutes. None being heard, the Board asks that the minutes be approved in February without change, when members have been reappointed. Members in attendance are Acting Chairman Eric Fraas, Acting Vice Chairman Greg Dionne, Dan Rider (pending), Kevin Cantwell (pending), Ken Smith, Jennifer Michniewicz, and Maxwell Kahn. Departmental liaisons included Thomas Voigt of the Planning Department, William Prenevau of the Building Department; Captain Charles Persons of the Police Department and Chris Schregel, Traffic Safety Coordinator/Engineering Liaison. Guest list is on record at the Town's Engineering Department.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Millersport Hwy. and Flint Rd. -- Request to lower speed limit, add strobe red lights, rumble strips, and radar feedback sign. Chris Schregel begins by clarifying road ownership and jurisdiction in this area: Flint Road is owned by the Town of Amherst south of Maple Road; where Flint Road intersects Millersport Highway is State responsibility since Millersport is a State Highway owned and maintained by the NYSDOT. The resident broaching this item reached out to the Traffic Safety Board asking for several enhancements to improve safety, specifically lowering the speed limit, strobing red lights at the intersection, rumble strips and a radar feedback sign. Chris Schregel immediately informs the members that strobe lights are not permitted per the MUTCD. A review of the accident history for this intersection indicated numerous crashes, and the daily traffic volume average recorded from 2015 is 27,000 vehicles traveling on Millersport in both directions; Flint handles approximately 10,000 vehicles per day. Acting Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:
 - a. Alfredo Longo, 96 Brook Lane Drive. He has observed 3 accidents and feels the crash data indicates problems with this intersection. He lives close by and travels through this intersection often, commenting that the speeds are excessive and dangerous. Mr. Longo is concerned about this intersection and would like to hear what can be done to improve safety.

Acting Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period for this item and opens the Board discussion by informing the resident that this is a NYSDOT controlled intersection, and as such the Town has no jurisdiction over changing the intersection, but the Town can refer recommendations to NYSDOT.

He continues by saying that this intersection has been before the Amherst Traffic Safety Board in the past and does have an accident history. After discussion, the Board would like to refer to NYSDOT the following safety enhancements:

- ask NYSDOT if they can replace the span wire signals and install mast arm signals that would allow for the high visibility signal backers
- look at the timing of the signal
- implement pedestrian safety intervals (LPI)
- the addition of a center median
- rumble strips to slow traffic
- radar sign to enhance the posted speed limit
- pedestrian bridge (pedestrian counts would be needed to warrant construction).

Refer to NYSDOT.

2. 5500 North Bailey Avenue – Difficulty turning out of the post office onto North Bailey Avenue. Chris Schregel begins by stating the resident broaching this item expressed concern over pulling out of the USPS Post office onto North Bailey, a three-lane local roadway in the spotlight recently because of the future Costco Development. No accidents are on record in the last 3 years related to left turns out of the post office, but Miovision analysis of the Bailey and Meyer split trend data has found that the southbound traffic volume is high and tends to queue back in the direction of the post office. Acting Chairman Fraas comments that this section of North Bailey Avenue has already been considered for enhancements due to the planned Costco Development, to which Chris Schregel adds that this area is within a zone called the Boulevard Central District where traffic has been looked at network-wide -- at some point North Bailey will hit capacity and will need to be considered for widening. Item received and filed.
3. Evans Street and Essjay Road – Request for pedestrian improvements. Chris Schregel begins the conversation by clarifying the intersection jurisdictions, saying it is within the Village of Williamsville boundaries, but the Town operates and maintains the signal; Miovision has been installed as well. A sidewalk was recently installed at this location and the Village of Williamsville is asking if any additional improvements should be added for pedestrian safety. Pedestrian counts were completed in 2014 showing 16 pedestrians crossing during the morning peak, 0 at mid-day, and 0 again during the afternoon peak. After some discussion, the members suggest referring to Highway to paint crosswalks, which would then allow Miovision to be programed to collect pedestrian counts. These pedestrian count results would then help determine if additional pedestrian accommodations are necessary, including pedestrian poles with walk/don't walk indications. All members are in agreement.
4. North Forest and JJ Audubon Pkwy. – Request for a southbound left turn arrow. Chris Schregel begins by saying that this request is asking for an additional left turn arrow going in the southbound direction at the intersection of JJ Audubon Parkway and North Forest Road. This is a Town signal, and he goes on to say that Miovision multimodal counts were analyzed to see if the traffic meets the criteria for a left turn arrow. The results indicated insufficient opposing volume count, and taken in conjunction with vehicle conflict data and the accident history, the intersection falls short of the necessary criteria for the requested turn arrow. Receive and file.
5. 2024 ATSB Meeting Schedule – October 2nd, 2024 changed to October 9th, 2024.
6. Election of Officers. Held.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Maynard Drive near Main Street – Held pending a sight distance study. Chris Schregel begins by reminding everyone that this item was brought before the Amherst Traffic Safety Board in November of 2023 when residents of Maynard Drive pointed out that overflow parking from Sacred Heart School was spilling onto Maynard Drive. The Board was informed that Sacred Heart has made earnest efforts to add parking, including purchasing nearby properties to satisfy their parking needs. Until recently, the overflow parking was accommodated in the adjacent parking lot, but ownership of that property has changed and school parking is no longer permitted. As a result, vehicles are parking on Maynard Drive which the residents claim causes sight distance issues when exiting driveways and driving down the street in general. In addition, garbage pickup and package deliveries have been difficult. Chris Schregel goes over the sight distance calculations which typically are done on side roads, but in this case were adapted with respect to the driveways, and confirms the results showed insufficient sight distance. What was also alarming was the parking observed all the way up to the Crosby/Maynard intersection, causing sight distance issues at the intersection. Acting Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:
- a) Jennifer Demert, Sacred Heart School, 3860 Main Street. Ms. Demert questions why a driveway would be calculated the same way as a side street. She feels any street that allows on-street parking would have compromised sight distances, citing the very street that she lives on as an example. In response, Chris Schregel explains that no sight distance calculation criteria are available for driveways, so the side street calculation methodology was followed as the closest substitute. He agrees that any street with on-street parking would most likely not meet the sight distance required if calculated for a driveway. Ms. Dermert states she is not in favor of making any changes related to the on-street parking in this area since she drives this area daily and has never observed any issues.
 - b) Hoa Zhang, 23 Maynard Drive. He comments that losing the parking spots in the bank parking lot has caused the parking issues on Maynard. When he pulls out of his driveway, he needs to be very cautious to avoid hitting vehicles and pedestrians. He inquires if Sacred Heart has purchased more land for parking and is informed that the newly purchased land is already being used for Sacred Heart parking, but there is still a shortage of parking spots.
 - c) Charles Grico, 200 Delaware Avenue, attorney for Sacred Heart School. He would like to add that he recently drove down Maynard Drive to see the conditions. He took some pictures that did not indicate any vehicles parked on the Crosby curve or excessive parking in front of area residents' houses. He suggests the possibility that the parking issues might not be typical of an average school day.
 - d) Chris Cloutier, 30 Maynard Drive. She begins by saying the main issue is backing out of her driveway, so to adapt to the current conditions they have started backing into their driveway to make it safer to pull out onto the street. She also questions parking calculations. She then makes the following points:
 - several accidents have occurred in the neighborhood while residents are attempting to back out of driveways
 - she informs the members that recently a school bus couldn't get down the street because of parent vehicles clogging the street at dismissal time
 - vehicles are parking on the Crosby curve causing sight distance issues.

Acting Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the discussion to members. Greg Dionne begins with a presentation he has prepared for this item, displaying on-screen a design concept that addresses the Crosby sight distance issue.

Working off an aerial view of the Maynard, Garden Court, Crosby intersection, he has several suggestions to improve the safety and viability of this intersection:

- create an island as displayed on the screen
- introduce a slip lane for turning right from Crosby onto Maynard
- adding sidewalks to allow for pedestrian passage
- stop bars & stop signs as shown
- parking restrictions all around the proposed island
- "No Entrance" or "One Way" signs to restrict access to the slip lane
- readjustment of the intersection creating ADA ramps at all corners as displayed on the screen.

Greg Dionne feels these changes would significantly improve sight distance and pedestrian safety. Short-term, Greg suggests improvements that would restrict parking around the curve on Crosby/Maynard. Jennifer Michniewicz likes the concept presented by Greg Dionne, and also agrees that restricting the parking around the Crosby Road curve would help with sight distance issues.

Greg Dionne makes a motion to enact a parking restriction around the curve up to the first tree on Maynard as indicated on the screen, and also a parking restriction for 30 feet from the stop sign located on Crosby – second by Jennifer Michniewicz. Motion remains open, pending a February meeting vote.

Greg Dionne's concept plan will be forwarded to Engineering to complete the conceptual drawings, formulate a cost estimate and submit in a Capital Improvement Project for funding.

Chris Schregel inquires if Sacred Heart has any updates regarding contact with the owner of the adjacent lot to see if limited parking would be permitted for the school. Ms. Demert responds by saying that she was copied on a letter that was sent to the property owner requesting a small section of parking spots along the fence line but has not received a response. Acting Chairman Fraas asks that this item be held until the February meeting.

- B. Dodge & Hopkins – Request for northbound and eastbound left turn arrows. Chris Schregel begins by saying this is a Town intersection, but both Hopkins and Dodge are County roads. The westbound and southbound signals already have designated left turn arrows, and the resident is asking for designated left turn arrows on all legs. Left turn data for this item was analyzed and the counts failed to meet the criteria. Based on this data, the Amherst Traffic Safety Board is not recommending addition of the requested left turn arrows. Receive and file.

Acting 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-Use Building – Patio Enclosure
ADDRESS: 5195 Main Street
PETITIONER: 5000 Group LLC

X MAJOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

SUBJECT: Proposed Multi-Family Development
ADDRESS: 480 Dodge Road
PETITIONER: The Green Organization

X MAJOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

1. Install a sidewalk and ADA ramp on the south side of Dodge Road between the new crossing and the west edge of pavement along Robin Ridge Road.

SUBJECT: Proposed Commercial Plaza – Building and Parking Additions
ADDRESS: 1401 Niagara Falls Boulevard (BCD)
PETITIONER: Benderson Development

X MAJOR SITE PLAN REVIEW IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

1. Remove proposed crosswalk along the Niagara Falls Blvd. curb cut and install a sidewalk through the pavement to better define the pedestrian access route.
2. Close the Meyer Road curb cut closest to Niagara Falls Boulevard. Consider an internal parking lot connection between the front and rear parking lots along the north side of building.

SUBJECT: Proposed Commercial /Apartment Building
ADDRESS: 5226 & 5228 Main Street
PETITIONER: 5226 Main Street LLC

X MAJOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

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

X MAJOR SITE PLAN REVIEW IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

1. Eliminate what appears to be a proposed crosswalk through and next to the mighty taco drive thru connected to the site.
2. In leu of the crosswalk referenced in comment #1, install a crosswalk across the driveway aisle between the rear of the hotel and the proposed building. Install ramps as needed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher P. Schregel
Traffic Safety Coordinator