

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

May 1, 2024

The May meeting of the Amherst Traffic Safety Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on May 1, 2024, Chairman Eric Fraas presiding. Chairman Fraas begins by asking if any changes or corrections are needed to the April 3, 2024 meeting minutes. Kevin Cantwell has an addition to Item 4, recalling a conversation related to the addition of a second stop sign on Willow Wood that was not documented in the minutes. A new paragraph for inclusion in the minutes is posted on the screen for approval by the members. Motion by Kevin Cantwell, second by Helaine Sanders, to approve the April 3, 2024 meeting minutes with the inclusion of the displayed paragraph. Approved 6-0. Members in attendance are Chairman Eric Fraas, Dan Rider, Kevin Cantwell, Jennifer Michniewicz, Nicholas Alterio and Helaine Sanders. Departmental liaisons included William Prenevau of the Building Department, Captain Charles Persons 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.

(The video/audio for this meeting stopped without explanation at 57:32 minutes, and consequently some of the detailed information may be absent from this written record).

NEW BUSINESS

1. Transit Road and Renaissance Drive intersection – signal timing is causing unwanted congestion on Renaissance. Chris Schregel begins by explaining that a resident contacted the Town with concerns related to the traffic backing up at the intersection of Renaissance Drive and Transit Road, displaying a diagram of what the backup could look like. The members discuss changing the signal timing to ease the backup issues, resulting in a motion to refer the matter to NYSDOT to reexamine traffic flow and check the timing on the signal. Approved 5-0-1 (Michniewicz abstained).
2. Mill Valley Court – Request for a parking restriction on the cul-de-sac bulb. Chris Schregel begins with a brief explanation of this item, saying that a member of Williamsville School Transportation reached out to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board for assistance. A school bus driver indicated difficulty navigating around the end of Mill Valley Court at the cul-de-sac due to a vehicle parking around the center island within the cul-de-sac bulb. This bus driver is asking the Amherst Traffic Safety Board to consider a parking restriction to make school bus pick-up and drop-off more manageable for the drivers. Chris Schregel displays the parking restriction proposals on the screen, explaining that the parking restrictions are usually for school days only from 7am-4pm, with the center island also restricted. He also notes that a letter with other options related to a parking restriction was recently received from a resident and it was distributed at the meeting to the members. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

a) John Trifilo, 146 Mill Valley. He makes the following points:

- he is a disabled veteran and walking any distance to park his car in the street is not feasible
- that if a parking restriction is implemented it will affect parking in front of his house which will be a big inconvenience when he has visitors
- six homes are going to be affected by this restriction
- he has had conversations with the bus driver and feels she does not have adequate driving skills since this cul-de-sac has never been an issue for other drivers of large vehicles and buses, having lived at this location for 32 years with no previous problems.

b) Artie Trifilo, 146 Mill Valley Court. He has the following to add:

- he has lived at this location over 30 years and has never seen or had any issues from buses or any other large vehicles
- that this might be the case of an under-skilled driver
- he has talked to residents of other nearby cul-de-sacs and they have mentioned that this bus driver has complained about those other areas also
- after talking with these other people, he wonders why Mill Valley is the only cul-de-sac being considered for a parking restriction
- points out that seven families would be affected by this restriction, along with visitors and delivery vehicles
- suggests more training for the driver or an easier route for her
- he has witnessed this very bus driver having no issues navigating the cul-de-sac with vehicles parked as outlined in the complaint.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the Board discussion by remarking that if this was a new development coming before the Amherst Traffic Safety Board today, common practice would be to sign the cul-de-sac's as 'no parking' during school hours right at the outset of roadway dedication. Chris Schregel goes over the proposals for possible parking restrictions:

- do not place any parking restrictions with the understanding that area residents park cars in locations that will not impede the bus as it drives through the cul-de-sac
- parking restriction on the entire cul-de-sac except the straight section before the curve
- parking restriction on the entire cul-de-sac

After a discussion among the members Chairman Fraas proposes to receive and file this item based both upon the residents' disapproval of a parking restriction and learning that the residents have reached an understanding with the bus driver to solve the matter after some conversation. Chairman Fraas comments that if the problem persists in the future, the parking restriction can be revisited. Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Dan Rider, to receive and file. Approved 6-0.

3. Old Orchard Drive/ N. Forest Road – Safety concerns turning onto N. Forest Road. Chris Schregel introduces this item by saying Old Orchard Drive is a local road that intersects with North Forest Road at an unsignalized County intersection, stop controlled on the Old Orchard leg. The resident would like some sort of signage to make south-bound motorists traveling on North Forest Road aware of the hidden intersection and the possibility of left-turning vehicles from Old Orchard joining the traffic flow. A recent sight distance calculation on Old Orchard indicated that a tree confuses the situation, partially obstructing the view on the approach to the intersection which makes the intersection fail sight distance requirements from that angle, but if vehicles pull further up to the corner, they move beyond the tree blockage and sight distance clears. On top of all that, south-bound vehicle speeds can affect the results of these calculations. No accidents have been reported in the past 5 years. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

- a. Delores Reynolds, 61 Old Orchard. She has lived on Old Orchard for 56 years and says the volume and speeds of traffic coming around the curve on North Forest towards Old Orchard make it very unsafe to turn onto North Forest Road from Old Orchard. She has tested this intersection and vehicles have between 4-5 seconds to pull out before having a conflict with an approaching vehicle. She feels the main issue is the speeds on North Forest and the curve in the road limiting the view of oncoming traffic. She is hoping there is some type of signage to improve the safety of this section of North Forest Road.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the discussion to the members. Jennifer Michniewicz would like to coordinate with the County, asking if North Forest Road meets the requirements for both a curve advisory sign at this location as well as signage indicating there's an intersection ahead. In response to Jennifer's comments concerning the tree, Bill Prenevau gives a brief explanation on what a clear vision triangle is and how it relates to this intersection. Chairman Fraas comments that the center turn lane can be used as a refuge for vehicles attempting turns. Chris Schregel displays various approved signs used to warn drivers of an upcoming road. Motion by Chairman Fraas, second by Jennifer Michniewicz, to refer this area to the Erie County Highway Dept. for the installation of an intersection advisory sign leading up to the curve, or any other recommendations that the County may have to advise drivers of the upcoming street and curve. Approved 6-0. Jennifer Michniewicz would also like the Building Dept. to address trimming the tree for better sight distance. Chairman Fraas would like a speed limit sign posted in the vicinity of Klein and North Forest Road to help with the speeding concerns.

4. 5105 & 5117 Sheridan Drive – Planning Board condition for a crossing guard. Chris Schregel begins the discussion by saying that this is a site plan at the corner of Mill and Sheridan Drive which that has gone through many design stages, finalized now with a right in / right out driveway on Mill Road; and an entrance from and a dedicated exit onto Sheridan Drive. These driveway curb-cuts will service a future coffee house and an existing Mighty Taco restaurant. This project has been approved by the Planning Board with the condition that the petitioner partially fund the placement of a crossing guard at the Mill Street driveway should the Amherst Traffic Safety Board think it's warranted. Ultimately the Town Board would make the final decision concerning a crossing guard to this location.

Chris Schregel reviews the crossing guard criteria put in place by the Town of Amherst, and then applies it to this location. The 20-pedestrian count needed to meet the warrant was satisfied in the afternoon but not the morning; and the vehicle count was nowhere near satisfied, based on projections from the Traffic Impact Study. Chris Schregel introduces David Chiazza, Executive Vice President of Iskalo Development, who explains that the Planning Board asked that Iskalo Development consider contributing towards the cost of a crossing guard if one was thought necessary at the Mill Road driveway. He explains that this was not a requirement but rather something to be evaluated -- if it was found necessary, Iskalo Development would consider the request. Chairman Fraas opens the discussion to the members, which results in the Board deciding against recommending a crossing guard at present, waiting to re-evaluate this request in reaction to the new traffic patterns after the full build-out.

5. Speed control enforcement – Discussion with the Amherst Police Dept. liaison. Captain Persons explains that traffic issues are numerous throughout the Town, and the speed trailers can help with controlling speeding on individual streets, but the number of available trailers is limited. Police enforcement is put in place when needed, but the number of officers available can't keep up with the speeding complaints. The Amherst Traffic Safety Board will continue to work with the Police Department to find solutions to speeding issues in Amherst.

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

OLD BUSINESS

None

SITE PLANS / REZONING

SUBJECT: Proposed Warehouse and Distribution Facility
ADDRESS: 669 S. Youngs Road
PETITIONER: F.W. Webb Company

X MAJOR SITE PLAN REVIEW IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

1. Plan C5.12 has many curve radii call-outs that either don't match the radius it is referring to, or are not calling out the proper locations.
2. Continue crosswalks across the parking lot drive aisle between hatching shown on the plans in front of the self serve and showroom entrances.
3. Properly drop the granite curb at handicap access aisles to create a flush-mount curb. Unclear in grading and site plan if this is included.

SUBJECT: Proposed Commercial Plaza – Building and Parking Additions
ADDRESS: 1401 Niagara Falls Boulevard
PETITIONER: Benderson Development Company.

X PROPOSED MINOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

Traffic Safety Board does not agree with the responses nor the solutions outlined in the petitioner's response letter of 4/1/24. As such, the following comments remain:

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 Townhomes with Attached Garages
ADDRESS: 4774 & 4780 Sheridan Drive
PETITIONER: 4780 Sheridan Drive, LLC

X MAJOR SITE PLAN REVIEW IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITION

1. Provide a crosswalk across the Sheridan Drive access between the sidewalk ramps.
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SUBJECT: Proposed Gateway Park – Bus Stop Shelters
ADDRESS: 159 Niagara Falls Boulevard
PETITIONER: Town of Amherst

X PROPOSED MINOR SITE PLAN IS
X APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

SUBJECT: Proposed Townhomes with Attached Garages
ADDRESS: 4774 & 4780 Sheridan Drive
PETITIONER: 4780 Sheridan Drive, LLC

X MAJOR SITE PLAN REVIEW IS
X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

2. Provide a crosswalk across the Sheridan Drive access between the sidewalk ramps.
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Meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for June 12, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher P. Schregel
Traffic Safety Coordinator