

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, September 10, 2020 at 6:00PM

Present: Chair Trustee Katy Cornell, Trustee Kim Irwin (arrived at 6:57p.m.), President Neil Palmer, Committee Members, Mr. John Schindler, Mr. DJ Richlen, Mr. John Oliveri and Ms. Barbara Decker.

Members Excused: None.

Also Present: Village Manager David De Angelis and Police Chief Jim Gage.

1. Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order, at 6:06p.m., by Trustee Cornell.

2. Review and approve minutes from August 13, 2020.

Trustee Cornell entertained a motion for approval. President Palmer made a motion for approval of the minutes, Mr. Oliveri seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Review stop sign request for east and west Gremoor at Fairhaven Blvd.

Trustee Cornell asked Chief Gage to summarize the request. Chief Gage indicated that Mr. Schwai, of 1665 Legion Drive, requests the Committee to review the safety of the intersection, due to his experience of nearly being involved in two accidents at that location over the past few months. Chief Gage indicates that there had been one accident at that location, since 2007, in 2013. Chief Gage went on to say that the accident occurred as a result of a driver failing to yield from a stop sign.

Mr. Schwai appeared in person and stated he had concerns about the safety of the intersection, since he had most recently, in August, nearly been struck by a driver disregarding a stop sign at that location. He suggested that the Committee consider either making the intersection a four way stop or eliminating all stop signs at that location.

Mr. Oliveri indicated that he had surveyed some of the neighbors in the area and learned that the major concern of residents in the area is drivers rolling through the existing stop signs.

The general consensus of the Committee was to have the police department monitor the situation for stop sign violations and not take any action at this time.

4. Update on railway safety options for Watertown Plank Rd. railway crossing.

Chief Gage provided an overview of steps taken to inform the public of railway safety issues, given the recent video that was circulated showing pedestrians and a bicyclist nearly being struck by an Amtrak Train at the Watertown Plank crossing.

Chief Gage indicated that he has reached out to the CP Rail Police Department and has spoken with CP Rail engineers concerning upgrade options and educational opportunities to better protect bicyclists and pedestrians. Chief Gage mentioned that the cost to install pedestrian gates could be as high as \$500,000.00 per intersection, since all signals would need to be replaced due to age and the ability to integrate new technology with the existing gates. Chief Gage indicated that the police department did make a Facebook post, with the video, advising the public of the railway safety concerns. He indicated that the post was picked up by local media and that it has been view approximately 9,000 times. Additionally, he plans to post a link on the department's page to CP Rail's "Operation Life Saver" educational programs. Chief Gage also indicated that he may consider directed enforcement of pedestrian violations at the crossing, after making a public appeal for people to comply with the crossing signals. Lastly, he mentioned that he planned to check with neighboring communities regarding recent changes made to their crossings in response to accidents in their communities. Chief Gage mentioned that any changes made, will require approval from the Federal Railway Administration, the State's Rail Commission and CP Rail.

Chief Gage will update the Committee on his progress at future meetings.

5. Review pathway rankings and future pathway options.

President Palmer provided and update of the pathway progression and history, referring to the 1989 study and other documents related to this topic. He also recognizes the desire of the community to increase Elm Grove's walkability. He explained that while pathways have been the topic of a great deal of conversation, the village is attempting to incorporate pathways into a very tight roadway budget, expressing that current roadway projects are underfunded as we approach this budget cycle. He mentioned that while the Board is accepting of a comprehensive pathway system, they are attempting to add or improve paths in conjunction with roadway projects in an attempt to keep costs down.

Trustee Cornell reviewed the last discussion of path ranking with the Committee of the Whole, indicating that that last ranking indicated the Hollyhock pathway as the first ranking

path, but that the Gebhardt path may be done first since Gebhardt Road is scheduled to be resurfaced and doing both projects together may be more cost effective.

Trustee Cornell recognized that there were members of the public to speak on pathway concerns, related to Juneau Blvd. east from Legion to Watertown Plank. President Palmer recognized that this pathway was a part of older plans, but that the Village did not have proper right of way needed to complete the pathway. He indicated that the Village would need to discuss right of way easement with St. Mary's Church, in order to move the project forward.

Ms. Theresa Kapke, of 13405 Juneau Blvd.; Amy Mager, of 1185 Church Street, and Maureen Polczynski, of 1180 Legion Drive, all spoke in favor of a pathway on Juneau Blvd. outlining their co-signed letter presented to the Village Board and Public Safety Committee. In addition to the points outlined in the letter, the Committee discussed lane delineators and markings to help better define on-road pathways.

Trustee Kim Irwin joined the meeting at 6:57PM.

President Palmer directed staff to begin discussions with St. Mary's regarding right of way and to ask DPW to review a ball park cost of completing a Juneau pathway and also to research lane delineators and markings to help better define existing pathways.

Ms. Natalie Schneider, of 14450 Club Drive, asked about the progress in constructing a pathway on Highland Drive, citing an inability to safety walk and access areas to the west of Highland Drive and access to the Middle School.

President Palmer agreed that Highland Drive would benefit from a pathway; however the cost in building a pathway on Highland is very high. He did indicate that a pathway is anticipated to be added to Gebhardt Road, when Gebhardt is resurfaced, but again acknowledged that the lack of a pathway on Highland Drive does not solve Ms. Schneider's concerns. President Palmer also brought up plans for a path along the east side of Pilgrim Park middle School, referred to as the Berkshire pathway that would parallel Highland Drive, from Gebhardt Road to Watertown Plank Road, but again this path does not help subdivisions north of Gebhardt. Trustee Irwin asked if the Committee could get updated project numbers for a Highland Drive pathway so the Committee knows what the true expense is when trying to make a decision. Staff was directed to obtain updated budget numbers for future discussion.

6. Other Business.

Mr. Schindler brought up a concern regarding lines of sight at the intersection of Fairhaven and Elmhurst. Chief Gage agreed to meet with Mr. Schindler to see if it was an issue that could be handled by the Department of Public Works, or if it needs to be brought back to the Committee for formal action.

Ms. Mary Inden, of 14745 Watertown Plank Road, asked if the Committee would consider a speed feedback sign for eastbound traffic on Watertown Plank Road, near her home. She explained that she felt the existing signs, on other roadways, are very effective and that speeding is prevalent on Watertown Plank Road. Chief Gage informed Ms. Inden that a sign was approved at the August 13, 2020 meeting and that it is awaiting approval through the budget process.

Ms. Inden also complained of trucks from the North Ave project, violating the Village's "no through trucking" ordinance. Chief Gage indicated that they will contact the project manager and advise them of the ordinance.

7. Adjournment

Trustee Cornell entertained motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:31p.m. Mr. Oliveri made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Decker, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

James P Gage
Chief of Police