A regular meeting of the Troy Traffic Committee was held Wednesday, June 18, 2014 in the Lower Level Conference Room at Troy City Hall. Pete Ziegenfelder called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

PRESENT: Sarah Binkowski
Tim Brandstetter
Ted Halsey
Al Petrulis
Pete Ziegenfelder

ABSENT: Richard Kilmer
Stevan Popovic

Also present: Tina Collins, 1231 Sherwood Forest
Chris Carr, 2504 Avonhurst
Jim Tafelski, 2505 Oxford
Lt. Eric Caloia, Fire Department
Sgt. Mike Szuminski, Police Department
Bill Huotari, Deputy City Engineer/Traffic Engineer

2. Minutes – April 16, 2014

RESOLUTION # 2014-06-18

Moved by Binkowski
Seconded by Halsey

To approve the April 16, 2014 minutes as printed.

YES: 5 (Binkowski, Brandstetter, Halsey, Petrulis, Ziegenfelder)
NO: None
ABSENT: 2 (Kilmer, Popovic)

MOTION CARRIED

REGULAR BUSINESS

3. Speeding Issues – Beach Road, South of Wattles Road

Heather Carr of 2504 Avonhurst and Jelena Tafelski of 2505 Oxford request that traffic control be placed on Beach Road, south of Wattles Road to slow traffic down. Ms. Carr and Ms. Tafelski state that the lack of traffic control on Beach encourages speeding on this section of road.

Traffic Engineering received one call from Mrs. Faust of 2505 Avonhurst who stated that a Stop sign was not necessary. She states that very few people speed on Beach when she observes traffic except for the occasional teenage driver. She is also concerned that her neighbor may have difficulty backing out of their driveway if a Stop sign were installed.

Traffic Engineering received an email from Mr. Jeff Carley who lives on Eastbourne Drive, which runs parallel to Beach in the area of concern. He would support additional pavement markings, speed limit signs or a Stop sign. He objects to a permanent radar speed sign, speed bump [hump] or any type of light.

A speed study was conducted and it does show that for northbound Beach, south of Oxford that there is a speed issue. The 85th percentile speed is 34 mph and is primarily an issue during AM and PM peak hours. The other locations studied did not show speeds that would be considered outside of the normal.

The speed study was shared with Troy Police and they responded by placing the radar trailer on Beach the week of May 19th and May 26th. Additional enforcement is planned when officers are not on higher priority calls.

This section of Beach is somewhat unique in that it is more akin to a collector street than a residential street. The existing right-of-way is 86' wide and the existing pavement width varies between 28'-30' wide. The right-of-way is primarily open with minimal roadside obstacles. The other local streets in this area are within 60' right-of-way and are generally 20'-22' wide pavement sections.

Parking is prohibited on the east side of Beach due to fire hydrants. Stop signs are located at each intersection between Wattles and Palmerston (near Schroeder Park) but Beach only stops at Palmerston and at Cheswick. At all of the other intersections, Beach is the through street and Stop signs are on the intersecting streets. For northbound traffic on Beach, there are no Stop signs after the All-Way Stop at Cheswick until the driver reaches Wattles Road. This is the section where speeds are the highest.

Beach is the primary access from Wattles Road but volumes are under 1,000 vehicles per day (vpd). There does not appear to be a cut-through problem as volumes are fairly consistent from day-to-day, Beach ends at Hampton and does not provide a convenient route to another major road.

In the past, a request like this would have been addressed by direct enforcement with the Traffic Safety Unit assigning officers to patrol the area as most of the drivers are consistent from day-to-day and educating drivers through enforcement is a powerful tool. With the downturn in the economy, just a few years ago, the Traffic Safety Unit was eliminated. Concentrated direct enforcement is no longer available even though Troy Police was able to provide a radar speed trailer and provide some level of enforcement recently. Enforcement now is provided by officers when they are not on higher priority calls so the level of enforcement available is significantly less than what was customary in the past.

Traffic Calming measures can take many forms. Typically, education is the first stage, then enforcement and finally physical measures.

To date, only one location in the City has a physical measure in place. A speed hump was placed on Walnut Hill, just north of Wattles and east of Adams. The speed hump was paid for by the residents. Feedback on this location in the past has been mixed as it was a singular installation and issues associated with the existing speed hump have included: additional noise; it does not slow traffic down; and inconvenient for residents.

Some options reviewed for Beach Road were:

1. **Additional speed limit signs** – placement of additional speed limit signs to reinforce the speed can be placed to enhance driver recognition of the residential area. Effectiveness is generally assumed to be minimal as most drivers proceed at a speed that they believe is "reasonable and prudent" for the conditions they encounter regardless of a posted speed limit.
2. **Longitudinal pavement markings** – mark the centerline of the road with a solid, double yellow marking and solid, white edge lines. Pavement markings have shown some effectiveness in reducing speeds due to a perceived narrowing of the traveled way. Other studies show an increase in speed due to the pavement markings making the driver's task of tracking the roadway easier. Residential streets typically do not have pavement markings so some drivers may assume that Beach is not a residential street if they encounter full pavement markings (double-yellow center line and white edge lines)
3. **In street speed limit markings** – large overlay cold plastic or painted "25 MPH" markings are placed on the pavement to remind motorists of the residential speed limit. Long term studies on the use of in street markings alone have shown little impact.
4. **Permanent radar speed sign** – these signs show drivers their speed as they approach the sign and one model considered allows for supplemental messages and traffic data to be recorded (eliminating the need to place traffic counters on the pavement). Speed boards are effective initially, but results over longer periods of time are inconclusive without intermittent enforcement. Rochester Hills has had positive results in reducing speeds at locations where they have speed boards installed.

Stop signs are not recognized as a traffic calming device. Stop signs are intended to assign right-of-way at intersections and are to be placed based on guidance from the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD). Studies have shown that Stop signs are not effective in reducing speeds and in many instances increase speeds due to drivers attempting to make up time due to a stop that they believe was not necessary. In addition, unwarranted Stop signs have the potential to reduce safety by creating a false sense of security for other drivers, children or pedestrians assuming a motorist will stop at a Stop sign.

Mr. Chris Carr of 2504 Avonhurst was in attendance at the meeting and has lived in his

house since July 2013. He believes that the 25 mph speed limit is not observed. They have a small child so they spend a lot of time outside and see many drivers exceeding the posted speed limit. There are several new families that have moved into the neighborhood and many of them have small children that they worry about. There is a blind curve on southbound Beach that makes sight distance less than ideal. He believes that the double-yellow striping on Beach, as you turn from Wattles, may lead drivers to believe that this section of Beach is not a residential road. Mr. Carr would like to see a Stop sign installed on Beach at Oxford or Avonhurst.

Mr. Jim Tafelski of 2505 Oxford agreed with the statements made by Mr. Carr. He also added that many older residents are moving out and new residents are moving in with children. He watches traffic frequently when he is outside and the majority of people drive at reasonable speeds but a few are moving at what he feels are excessive speeds. He also reports that there are a lot of bikers that use Beach Road frequently. Mr. Tafelski also would like to see Stop signs installed on Beach at Oxford or Avonhurst.

Ms. Binkowski discussed the use of Stop signs for speed control. Stop signs do not control speed but are used for assigning right-of-way at an intersection when warranted. Stop signs can create a false sense of security for pedestrians, when unwarranted, creating a potentially unsafe situation.

Mr. Ziegenfelder stated that when unwarranted Stop signs are installed speeds may actually increase as drivers may slow at a Stop sign but increase speeds after the Stop sign as they feel they were stopped for no apparent reason.

Mr. Petrulis stated that one of the issues on this section of Beach is that the intersecting streets are T-intersections so they are not full intersections. He also discussed the installation of unwarranted Stop signs. Mr. Petrulis stated that the same drivers travel this section of Beach everyday and his concern is that an unwarranted Stop sign may be ignored and create an unsafe situation.

Sgt. Szuminski discussed the Police Department's ability to enforce speed limits. The concerns on Beach are the same as numerous other areas in Troy and occur at the same time as at other locations, primarily in the AM and PM peak hours. Troy Police has done enforcement at this location and has issued citations.

Mr. Brandstetter has concerns about installing a Stop sign and having children assuming a car will Stop.

Mr. Halsey stated that no matter what may be done that parents must still be responsible for their children when they are outside.

Discussion of physical measures such as speed humps ensued. This section of Beach has no curb so there is the potential that vehicles could drive around a speed hump creating an unsafe situation due to the ditches along Beach. Speed humps are most effective when used in a series. This section of Beach would require at least three speed

humps. Concerns relative to speeds between speed humps, noise, snow plowing and emergency vehicle access times were discussed. If speed humps were to be pursued they would need to be approved by residents in the area as they are paid for by the residents through a Special Assessment District. This area is scheduled for a mill and overlay project next spring, so any physical changes could be done at that time to benefit from the larger project. Traffic Committee members and residents in attendance agreed that other lower cost measures should be pursued at this time.

The members discussed the use of radar speed boards and a recommendation was made to install one on northbound Beach with the possibility of moving it to southbound Beach to provide additional feedback to drivers. Traffic Engineering will discuss this option with the supplier as some models of the speed boards are portable. The radar speed boards are informational signs so no Traffic Control Order is required.

The radar speed board is to be installed this summer and then a follow up speed study will be conducted in the fall after school is in session to compare speeds before and after the installation. The results of the speed study will be brought back to the Traffic Committee for discussion and if needed for further discussion of traffic calming measures on this section of Beach.

4. Traffic Calming Measures – Speed Humps

Traffic Engineering performed an informal survey of neighboring and similar communities relative to their use of Traffic Calming measures and specifically speed humps. One of the primary criteria for determining the use of speed humps is 85th percentile speeds (the speed at which 85% of traffic is travelling at or below). Listed are the 85th percentile speeds that are one factor used as part of the minimum criteria for consideration of speed hump installation for those agencies that have a program in place.

- Rochester Hills – 85th percentile speeds exceed the posted speed by 6 mph or greater
- Farmington Hills – 85th percentile speeds of 35 mph or greater
- Road Commission for Oakland County – 85th percentile speed greater than or equal to 35 mph

Rochester Hills is by far the most aggressive in promoting and implementing speed humps and have placed them at several locations throughout their city. The feedback they have received has been mostly positive and they have found that the speed humps have been effective in reducing vehicle speeds.

The Road Commission for Oakland County has placed speed humps at two (2) locations in the County and also found that speeds were reduced.

Farmington Hills has installed speed humps in seven (7) locations and found that speeds in general have decreased but there have been some resident concerns relative to noise and aesthetics.

Agencies that do not have Traffic Calming programs in place:

- Novi
- Clawson
- Madison Heights
- Birmingham
- Sterling Heights

One large area of concern with speed humps is their impact on emergency vehicle response time. The City of Los Angeles has over 3,700 speed humps installed and in February 2013 recommended that their program be stopped and that a ban be placed on the installation of new and replacement of existing speed humps. This recommendation was not acted on at that time and it is still under review.

There are numerous other types of traffic calming measures and a summary of various options was provided to the Traffic Committee members as information.

5. Public Comment

No members of the public provided comment.

6. Other Business

No other business was brought forward by the Committee.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Pete Ziegenfelder, Chairperson

Bill Huotari, Deputy City Engineer/Traffic Engineer

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