

Present: **Council** - President Craig; President Pro-Tem Kennedy; Members: Downey, Pfeifer, Stearn and Walsh
Planning Board - Chairperson Fox, Vice-Chairperson Domzal; Members: Bliven, Borowski, Jensen, Smith and Tillman

Absent: Council - Munguia
Planning Board - Belaustegui and Robiner

Also Present: Village Manager, Hanlin
Director of Public Services, Spallasso
Village Building Official, Byrwa
Planning Consultant, Wyrosdick

Chairman Fox called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. in the Village municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as published.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE PUBLISHED AGENDA

No one wished to be heard.

APPROVE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 25, 2000 PLANNING BOARD MEETING

On page 4, third paragraph from bottom, correct spelling of name to read "Martin Kotch". On page 9, fourth paragraph from top of page, correct the address of Bobby Watson to read "31680 Lahser".

MOTION by Borowski, supported by Smith, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on October 25, 2000 be approved as amended.

Motion passes unanimously.

PRESENTATION OF PATHWAY PLAN

Planning consultant Kathryn Wyrosdick from Birchler Arroyo delivered an abbreviated presentation of the pathway plan that was given to the audience at the October 25 public discussion held by the Planning Board. She presented an overview of the pathway plan and talked about how the plan was developed by the board. (See October 25, 2000 Planning Board meeting minutes.)

The Planning Board has been reviewing adequate accessibility alternatives for residents in an effort to provide a more walkable and accessible community. The board reviewed historical data on sidewalks in the Village and did an inventory of existing sidewalks and crosswalks. The proposed plan is designed to improve the pedestrian environment by improving crosswalks, connecting existing sidewalks, adding new sidewalk, implementing traffic calming techniques, and providing connections that could join residential areas if a pedestrian easement is obtained between lots. The safety of children and pedestrians is foremost throughout the plan.

Wyrosdick used a map on display to indicate the preferred recommendations for pathways in the Village. The recommendations are currently shown as principle and additional recommendations. The principle recommendations are considered a high priority to address safety concerns. Additional recommendations are pathways that should be done to enhance the pathway system. Pedestrian connections are designated on the map in a separate color to represent areas where an easement between lots could join residential areas. Wyrosdick noted that there has been discussion among Planning Board members on whether the plan should prioritize the recommendations.

Wyrosdick stated that once the recommendations were in place, the next step was to look at design elements for those recommendations. Wyrosdick displayed a board showing the crosswalk at Groves High School on Evergreen as an example of the board's analysis of the crosswalks that were identified. Wyrosdick remarked that the areas where traffic calming techniques are suggested would warrant an additional traffic study.

Elements that will be added to the pathway plan prior to its completion include conceptual design recommendations for crosswalks and pathways and strategies to implement plan recommendations.

Wyrosdick emphasized that this plan determines what the Village needs and wants and represents a future vision for the Village in terms of pathways. It is not designed to be a capital improvement program. Wyrosdick thinks that there is a great deal of validity to the Planning Board's recommendations. Once the plan is adopted, the next step is to implement the plan, which may take five to fifteen years.

Fred Adams from Metamora Green referred to an article in Sunday's Birmingham Eccentric newspaper stating that the sidewalk problem in Beverly Hills has been going on for decades. He confirmed that by reading a copy of a letter dated December 3, 1979 written to Governor Milliken. The letter says that no child in the Village of Beverly Hills can get on a bicycle and ride to a school, church, store, or other facility without taking his life in his hands. The letter mentioned the dangers of traffic on major roads. Governor Milliken's answer was that this was a local problem.

Adams commented that the consultant spoke about connecting sidewalks. He maintains that, with just a few hundred yards of sidewalk to join existing sidewalk, the Village could connect Nottingham, Metamora Green, Camelot and provide access on Thirteen Mile Road to Woodside Athletic Club and Bingham Farms school.

John Chalifoux of 18160 Buckingham lives between Southfield and Riverside Roads. He commended the planning consultant and Planning Board on the pathway plan. Chalifoux stated that there are some areas in his neighborhood without sidewalks or traffic control. He is concerned about the safety of his daughter walking through the neighborhood to Beverly School. Chalifoux agrees with the goals of safety, aesthetics, and benefit to the community with safety being at the top of the list.

Tom Bourne of 16100 Buckingham commented that people do not use the sidewalks on his street. Many people walk or bicycle in the street.

DISCUSS PLANNING BOARD ITEMS WITH COUNCIL

Pathway Plan

Fox stated that an overview of the pathway plan was presented to apprise Council of the plan and request direction for finalization of the plan. There have been differing opinions among Planning Board members on whether the board should address the financial aspect of the pathway plan. Fox is a proponent of the Planning Board not concerning itself with financial matters. There are members who would like to prepare a strategy that would include a breakdown of the cost of implementing this plan. The Planning Board would also like general direction from Council on whether the proposed plan is comprehensive enough.

Domzal stated that he would like the Planning Board to address implementation of the plan. The first step would be Council approval of the plan. He thinks that the Planning Board should address the various types of construction and have an idea of the cost before the plan is presented to the public. Maintenance and liability are other issues that could be addressed up front. Domzal agrees that funding mechanisms are a Council matter. The Council should consider what it would like the Planning Board to do in terms of these items that are raised by the public.

Borowski commented that he is a proponent of finalizing the pathway plan soon. Including additional focuses in the plan will delay it further.

Fox also asked for the sense of Council on whether the plan should include principle and additional recommendations. This has been debated among Planning Board members. There are those that propose removing the prioritization on the basis that all of the recommendations are a priority because they meet the goals and objectives of the plan. It is understood that the pathway plan will not be implemented at one time.

Fox remarked that bikeways were not addressed in the pathway plan. Her thought was that the Village could identify bicycle routes with signs. The Planning Board would like to return to this topic at some point.

Pfeifer questioned the focus of the Planning Board with respect to its priorities for implementing the pathway plan. Wyrosdick explained the principle and additional recommendations. The principle recommendations are the main focus and represent what should be done. They provide the safest

pathways from homes to community destinations or schools. Additional recommendations may be less of a priority, but they add value and make sense. If the principle recommendations were implemented, constructing the additional recommended sidewalks would connect existing sidewalks.

Pfeifer expressed concern about the placement of sidewalk on Evergreen Road from Beverly Road to Riverside Drive due to the configuration and topography of the road. She questioned whether it is a good idea to encourage pedestrian or bike traffic on that section of road and asked if interior connections have been considered.

Wyrosdick explained that the Planning Board felt that a connection to the Douglas Evans nature preserve and connecting to Groves High School is important. The west side of the road provides the least amount of obstructions to putting in a sidewalk. She noted that there are some residential fences and private landscaping located in the road right-of-way. The Village could move the fencing out of the right-of-way and install pathways. It is not a major topography issue to install pathways, but there are issues of encroachment into the right-of-way. It becomes more difficult to place pathways south of Douglas Evans due to the Natural Beauty Road designation.

Pfeifer asked if the ordinance that designates that part of Evergreen Road as a Natural Beauty Road addresses restrictions on improvements along that road. Bliven stated that he has looked at the ordinance, and it gives no guidelines for maintenance, construction, or use of the Natural Beauty Road. It appears that the designation of that part of Evergreen Road as a Natural Beauty Road would not prohibit installing a pathway.

Fox commented that the Planning Board is looking at alternatives to the traditional cement sidewalk on Evergreen Road, particularly south of the Douglas Evans nature preserve. Consideration was given to a foot path that will allow people to go from the existing sidewalk near Groves High School to Douglas Evans. The Planning Board is not at the point of suggesting specific materials.

Fox stated that the Planning Board would like to finalize the pathway plan in a couple more meetings. The board is looking for direction from Council on whether to address cost and other items that have been mentioned.

Craig thinks that the Planning Board has done a great job and has fulfilled everything Council has requested in its initial direction to the board. He stated that Council will need cost estimates when it is deciding how to implement the pathway plan. The question before Council is whether it is the Planning Board's responsibility to provide that information or whether Council should request Public Services Director Spallasso to cost out the proposed sidewalk. There are some issues relative to the Planning Board's vision of what the sidewalk should look like in certain locations and the material used for a pathway. Craig maintains that there should be dialog between the Planning Board and whoever prepares cost estimates.

Priority is another issue. The Council should consider whether it wants the Planning Board to prioritize the sidewalks recommended in the plan or whether that should be a political decision of Council.

Financing incorporates maintenance and liability issues. Craig understands that Bloomfield Township considers its sidewalk system to be a seasonal pathway and therefore does not require the walks to be shoveled. That limits the sidewalk to a nine month pathway but takes the burden off people to shovel the walk and removes liability. Currently, Beverly Hills requires property owners to maintain their own sidewalk. Another consideration is whether the Village wants to invest in a snow removal machine to take care of the sidewalks along major roads, leaving the interior sidewalks to the residents. Council should decide whether the Planning Board should concern itself with financing and maintenance.

Downey commented that the pathway plan is a long term vision. He does not think that residents want the plan prioritized, and he is comfortable with that from a master plan standpoint. However, having a priority list is valuable to Council in its decision making process with respect to implementation of the plan. Downey believes that implementation of the pathway plan rests upon the Council. He suggests cooperation between the Planning Board, Council, and administration to prioritize sidewalks with cost estimates and to develop an implementation plan.

Downey concurs that it is currently dangerous to walk along the side of Evergreen Road where it is designated as a Natural Beauty Road. He would like to encourage people to utilize the road and visit Douglas Evans.

Kennedy congratulated the Planning Board on doing a phenomenal job on this detailed study. She agrees that implementation of the pathway plan is not a function of the Planning Board. Planning Board members could work with administration on cost estimates for the recommended sidewalks.

Kennedy thinks that Council needs to consider approval of the pathway plan at a regular Council meeting. She believes it would be helpful to Council if some priorities were included in the plan. Kennedy anticipates implementing the plan in segments using different funding methods depending on that section. She suggested that administration consider implementing crosswalk improvements as soon as possible to be funded from the road fund budget.

Stearn does not think the plan should be changed with respect to designating principle and additional priorities. The plan should be brought before Council for adoption. The Planning Board can make amendments to the plan in future years. Stearn does not believe that cost estimates should be part of the plan. He questioned whether the Planning Board looked at alternative routes other than main roads.

Fox responded that the Planning Board did think about alternate routes. She referred to the map to show an area where the Planning Board attempted to direct traffic inward and connect subdivisions with crosswalks on Lahser. It was determined that the speed on Lahser Road would not be conducive to safe crossings. It was agreed that it would be better to recommend completing the sidewalk on Lahser Road and direct people to cross at major intersections.

Stearn does not think that the plan should address implementation. That is something that the Council must determine. What he would like to see in the plan is more specifics on the types of materials recommended for pathways and crosswalks. That will have an impact on how acceptable the pathways are to people in the Village. Stearn thinks that the Planning Board did a monumentally good job on the pathway study.

Walsh commented that he thinks that the issue of funding should go back to Council. With regard to scheduling projects, there may be some things that can be addressed immediately such as intersection improvements and crosswalks. He referred to the 13 Mile and Evergreen intersection as needing work along with the 14 Mile and Lahser Road intersection.

Craig suggested that the plan include more definitive suggestions for crosswalk improvements and redesign of intersections. The plan identifies the problems but does not elaborate on the solutions. Craig does not think the Planning Board should discuss pricing or prioritizing. He maintains that prioritization cannot be done without cost information. Another issue to consider is how many people will benefit by a particular section of sidewalk. Craig agreed that the Planning Board could provide Spallasso with information on proposed design and material for certain pathways before cost estimates are obtained.

Fox commented on plans for some of the crosswalks identified in the study as needing improvement. She talked to the President of the Birmingham School Board about the board's review of crosswalks.

Fox would like someone from the Village to address the school board when the pathway plan is completed and approved by Council to see if there can be cooperation between the Village and the School Board to improve the crossing situation at Groves High School. We all have concerns about the safety of kids.

Spallasso remarked that all existing crosswalks have been re-striped and approved for safety.

Bliven stated that he does not consider the pathway plan part of the Village master plan, and it should not be included in the Master Plan. The pathway plan is a separate document similar to the park master plan. With regard to maintenance and liability, the Village now has 72 miles of sidewalk that generate maintenance and liability concerns. How to address this matter is a Council decision.

Bliven maintains that providing details on crosswalks and road intersections or materials for sidewalks is not the purpose of a master plan. He thinks that this is a function of the engineering department when a portion of the plan is implemented. The Planning Board can provide guidelines for design of a crosswalk or sidewalks, but it is the role of the engineering department to engineer the improvement. As far as prioritizing, the Planning Board can provide Council with segments of sidewalk that should be done at one time. Priority projects are determined by the demand of the local citizens or safety considerations.

Fox called a recess at 9:15 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 9:25 p.m.

Village Entrance Signs

Jensen related that he has been working with administration on a concept for a Village identification sign to be placed in the area outside of the municipal office between the sidewalk and the street with a similar sign proposed for the public safety building. The Village Manager is in the process of obtaining bids for these signs. This will be a prototype for signage that could be used at Village entryways and other locations throughout the Village.

The Planning Board has seen the design and has agreed that, once the sign is implemented at the Village offices, they will adopt variations on the same theme considering colors, posts, and maintenance in order to create a cohesive design for municipal signs throughout the Village. It was noted that this project has been funded by Council for the current fiscal year.

Recommendation on the “big foot” housing issue

Bliven stated that the planning consultant prepared a comparison of the Beverly Hills zoning regulations within its smaller lot single-family home districts with those of surrounding communities that are similar in size or have well established downtown areas. A chart provided an overview of standard residential building setbacks, height, lot coverage, and lot sizes in order to identify areas in zoning standards that may permit or prohibit “big foot” housing to occur. The setback requirements in Beverly Hills are substantially greater than those in the other communities.

It was the consensus of the Planning Board after discussing the material that there is no need to pursue the “big foot” housing issue based on the Village’s Zoning Ordinance restrictions. The Planning Board will forward its recommendation to Council.

Downey understands that the recommendation of the planner is that the Village has adequate setbacks so that “big foot” housing does not present a problem in Beverly Hills. He noted that the R-3A zoning district has a minimum lot size of 6,000 SF with minimum 900 SF homes and side setbacks of 10 ft. There are existing homes that have less than the minimum setbacks. He made the point that the Village has lots with existing conditions in some areas that are conducive to “big foot” housing.

The planning consultant has indicated that the only situation that could enable infill housing to occur is if a lot less than 60' wide was granted a variance from the minimum required setback by the Village Zoning Board of Appeals.

Downey stated that there are municipalities with high density populations that restrict the maximum percentage of a lot that could be covered by a building. Non-conforming uses will experience pressure as the Village continues to age and the price of property increases.

Fox summarized that it is the consensus of the Planning Board that it is not ready to recommend an additional ordinance requirement at this time. The board thinks that the side, front, and back yard setbacks and height requirements are sufficient to prevent “big foot” housing, given the economics of our community. The majority of Council members agreed not to pursue the “big foot” housing issue.

Underground utilities

Smith stated that, at the time the Planning Board drafted the site development handbook, it was noted that a major aesthetic issue in the community was above ground utilities. If underground utilities could be required or encouraged in future design, it would improve the aesthetics of the Village. Smith estimates that it would take about two hours of the Planning Board’s time and the same amount of time on the part of the planning consultant to look into the feasibility of whether or

not the Village could require underground utilities. Smith is investigating this matter with a Michael Porter, Vice-President of Public Relations for Detroit Edison.

It was suggested that this could be looked at when the Planning Board reviews the site development handbook for incorporation into the Zoning Ordinance.

Discuss whether the Village should pursue regulations relative to gates

Smith indicated that the Village has no affirmative statement on the topic of gates. He noted that there has been litigation in the community. Smith maintains that there are inconsistencies in the Village with respect to gates. In about two to four hours of the Planning Board's time and an equal amount of the planning consultant's time, a policy could be drafted on gates that would be consistent with the Village's discussion of fences. Smith believes that this would deter future litigation.

Fox commented that there is a mixed view of this topic. Some board members do not want to address gates. She requests feedback from Council on whether this is something that the Planning Board should address as a future priority.

It was the consensus of Council that the Planning Board should not pursue any study or discussion of regulations pertaining to gates.

Incorporating portions of Site Development Handbook guidelines into the Zoning Ordinance

Bliven displayed a copy of the Village of Beverly Hills Site Development Handbook prepared in 1996. Some of the items in the book should be incorporated into the Village Zoning Ordinance after the Planning Board completes the Southfield Road corridor study. These are two proposed 2001 Planning Board priorities.

Council was in favor of the Southfield Road Corridor study and incorporation of portions of the site development handbook guidelines into the Zoning Ordinance as priority projects for the next fiscal year.

Fourteen Mile Road corridor study

Fox stated that the Fourteen Mile Road corridor study has been funded and the Planning Board has just begun its work program. The Planning Board requests direction from Council on the extent of the corridor study. The board would like any current information on the time line for Fourteen Mile Road reconstruction.

Spallasso stated that Fourteen Mile Road is scheduled for reconstruction after September of 2001. The work could start in October or November but it will be a 2002 springtime project. It will be a three lane improvement. The schematic plan is not available at this time, but Spallasso hopes to have something to show Council by May. Spallasso mentioned that the road design was approved by the Fourteen Mile Road citizens task force.

Fox clarified that the Planning Board study does not involve the road. The road design will affect the property use that the board will be discussing.

Bliven noted that the pathway plan calls for improvements to the intersection of Fourteen Mile and the west side of Southfield Road. The Village should look at what can be done to facilitate pedestrian crossings in that area. Borowski was concerned about the sidewalk on 14 Mile Road being too close to a 40 MPH road.

Spallasso responded that projects that are federally funded must address pedestrian needs as well as vehicular needs. That intersection will be part of the improvement.

Craig expressed the view that the Fourteen Mile Road study should incorporate Southfield to Greenfield Roads and look at land use. The study will address whether the Village should consider encouraging commercial development along that area of Fourteen Mile. Craig does not think that the houses on Fourteen Mile Road will keep pace with the rest of the Village as far as value, which may result in an accelerated deterioration of the area. Craig is concerned that it will become a strip of rental houses. Another question is whether to encourage multiple dwelling housing or commercial development along that strip. The Planning Board may address whether the Village should encourage a developer to buy several lots and build a row of townhouses.

Downey stated that the Village Master Plan says that this area should be residential or cluster oriented. He would like to adhere to the Master Plan. Downey remarked that rental property is not always the problem. There are maintenance issues.

Stearn would like to see Fourteen Mile Road remain single family residential without cluster housing or business zoning. He thinks that rental regulations may be in order for a future priority study of the Planning Board. Kennedy added that she has been concerned about rental properties on her own street.

Fox summarized that Council concurs that the Fourteen Mile Road corridor study should extend from Southfield to Greenfield Roads. The Planning Board will consider land use including residential, more dense residential, and commercial.

Discuss idea of Village Center and cohesive vision for major roadways in Beverly Hills; Discuss possibility of Thirteen Mile Road corridor study from Greenfield to Kennoway

Fox commented that board member Belaustegui is concerned that the Village does not have a comprehensive plan for its major roads and corridors. He proposes that the Planning Board undertake a study of the Thirteen Mile Road corridor from Greenfield to Kennoway after completion of the Fourteen Mile Road corridor study. Belaustegui would encourage discussion of the idea of the Village having a cohesive vision for major roadways in Beverly Hills. Fox clarified that we are talking about the land use connected to the roadway, not the roads themselves. This would be a 2002 priority.

Spallasso stated that Thirteen Mile Road between Greenfield and Southfield Road is on the County's list of roads to be improved. It is submitted as a five lane improvement. If the project is approved, there will be discussion regarding the design of the road. It was mentioned that Fourteen Mile Road was originally submitted as a five lane project but was amended to be constructed as a three lane road.

Craig concurs with undertaking these projects whenever the Planning Board can fit them into its schedule. The Village should consider whether it wants its major corridors to look like a wide right-of-way with sidewalks set far back from the road and a variety of fences. Consideration should be given to what people will remember when they drive down major roads in the Village.

Belaustegui's proposal of developing a vision for the Village that includes a new Village center will be discussed when he is present to explain his proposal.

Southfield Road corridor study

The Planning Board proposes working on the Southfield Road corridor study following the Fourteen Mile Road corridor study.

Jensen commented that the Planning Board will begin by discussing what it would like to accomplish and how to proceed with the work program. He views the Southfield Road corridor study as an extensive and important task. Jensen commented on the haphazard development and disregard for proper planning along Southfield Road. There are parking and lighting issues. Placement of vegetation could be improved. There is re-use of buildings and property that create a sense of urgency for this corridor plan.

Jensen proposes that the Planning Board be authorized to recommend to Council a proposal for how it would like the Southfield Road corridor to look and what it will take to accomplish that end result. This work program will be presented to Council with a budget for approval as a 2001 priority project.

Fox added that the Planning Board will consider a more detailed and better use of the property on Southfield Road and how to incorporate that commercial strip into the Village in terms of design, traffic, parking, signage, lighting and walking. The plan would be referred to developers who come before the Planning Board with a site plan.

Ideas from Council on its 2001 priorities

Craig stated that there have been recurrent issues raised with respect to the Village municipal site and public safety building site. Residents have complained about the grounds. He would like the

Planning Board to develop a site plan for this complex. There are issues with respect to a screening wall, landscaping, and property maintenance.

Craig mentioned that there are events occurring as Beverly Park is developed that will effect the DPW complex. Wood chips and compost will be moved from the park to this site. How these things can be incorporated with the least impact to residents should be addressed. Functional issues include the viability of the heating and ventilating system at the public safety building, the condition of the DPW building, and the roof on the municipal office building.

Wyrosdick stated that Birchler Arroyo could look at problems associated with the existing site. They would determine what the Village wants to be able to do with this complex and the best way to accomplish that goal. A more detailed site plan would be the next step after that.

Craig concurred with the development of a concept by the Planning Board and consultant. Eventually this would be forwarded to the Finance Committee to consider capital improvement issues that impact grounds and maintenance of Village property in the five year financial plan.

Planning Board members suggested that Council discuss its concept for the municipal grounds and provide clear direction to the Planning Board. It was agreed that communication with the neighboring property owners would be part of this undertaking. Village administration would assist the Planning Board in assessing the practical problems and operational needs of the Village. The board will work with the planning consultant to arrive at a cost estimate to develop a concept plan for the municipal property.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

Bliven observed that a fence was recently erected at Beverly School that probably violates Village fence ordinance requirements with respect to height, opaque construction, proximity to the road, and being constructed with the good side facing inside. He is bringing this to the attention of Council to see what can be done to correct this situation.

Craig stated that this was brought up at Monday's Council meeting, and a remedy will be explored.

Bliven referred to an article in the July 2000 issue of the Michigan Planner that says that a community master plan does not have to be approved by the governing body. Both the Township Planning Act and the Municipal Planning Act state that a Planning Commission may adopt the master plan. Bliven remarked that the Village should have a planning commission.

MOTION by Borowski, supported by Domzal, to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m.
Motion passes unanimously.

Andrew Craig
Council President

Ellen Marshall
Village Clerk

Sharon Mullin Fox, Chairperson
Planning Board