

Present: Chairperson Borowski; Vice-Chairperson Belaustegui; Members: Bliven, Domzal, Fox, Jensen, Smith and Tillman

Absent: Robiner

Also Present: Building official, Byrwa
Council liaison, Walsh
Planning consultant, Wyrosdick

Chairperson Borowski called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Village municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was amended to include item #7A: "Discussion of Planning Board Budget Process".

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE PUBLISHED AGENDA

There were no comments from the public.

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION by Bliven, supported by Domzal, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on Wednesday, March 22, 2000 be approved as submitted.

Motion passes unanimously.

REVIEW REVISED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS

The goals and the objectives statement for the pedestrian pathways plan was revised by the planning consultants to reflect the discussion at the last Planning Board meeting. The reworked goals set forth fewer and more well defined goals that represent the Planning Board priorities for the pathways plan.

Wyrosdick summarized the goals and objectives. A pathway system should be designed to promote the safety of pedestrians. Another goal of the sidewalk plan is to enhance neighborhood access and connections between homes and community facility destinations. The pathway system should be attractive in the materials used and in terms of preserving natural beauty of the community. A pathway system should be useful and logical and designed to encourage its use as an alternative to driving.

Wyrosdick outlined how each goal could be achieved. Safety can be achieved by incorporating various traffic calming techniques, which will be discussed during the alternative strategies element of the plan. Crosswalks can be created between pedestrian pathways or across roadways. Bulbing out of intersections is done so that pedestrians have less of an area to travel across roadways. Narrowing roadways is a way to encourage design speeds to follow posted speeds of roadways. Stating that safety is an issue and a goal early in the plan will promote a plan that is designed with the safety of pedestrians in mind.

Connectivity of neighborhoods has been discussed, and important community facilities have been identified. Community facilities have been mapped along with gaps in existing sidewalk connections. It has been made clear that residents are concerned that existing natural beauty, landscaping, and vegetation be protected. An attractive system is a goal of this plan. Alternative materials should be considered in a pathway system: concrete, asphalt, crushed limestone, and perhaps wood chips. Alternative strategies will be considered for less intrusive construction in areas with landscaping and natural features.

Another goal is to have a useful and logical system. Wyrosdick commented that routes should connect to destinations that people travel. Design and safety techniques from SEMCOG and ITE will be incorporated into the plan. Once a plan that makes sense for the Village is established, it could be taken another step forward by implementing plan recommendations into design standards to insure that plan recommendations are followed.

The board discussed the goals and objectives prepared by Birchler Arroyo. Board members suggested combining “connectivity” and “useful and logical system” into one goal to keep the goals simple and focused on what the Planning Board is trying to do.

A goal discussed at the last meeting was balancing of an individual’s rights and feelings about bike paths in front of their property with interests of the community at large. The individual’s concerns involve cost, disruption to property, privacy, maintenance of the pathway, and liability issues. A goal should be to develop a practical plan that balances community and individual needs.

Board members suggested text changes. It will be clarified in the introduction that the word “pathway” will be used in the report to generalize sidewalks, bike ways, bike paths, pedestrian safety paths and crosswalks. The modifications proposed by the board will be incorporated into a revised draft for review and possible adoption at the next Planning Board meeting.

Domzal distributed notes that he made last weekend while taking a bike ride through the western part of the Village. He summarized his observations. There are areas on the west side of the Village with hazardous conditions for bicyclists and where there would be problems with constructing sidewalks. There are gaps in existing sidewalks. Domzal suggests that creative thinking be used to address safety issues while the Village is working on a long term master plan for pathways. The Planning Board should consider what can be done in the short term to improve safety without spending a lot of money. He thinks the Planning Board should consider establishing a bike route as soon as possible.

Norman Rubin of 31020 Rivers Edge Court commented that he is pleased that members of the board recognize that there are features on 13 Mile Road that should not be disrupted by sidewalk construction. Rubin commented that copies of the material being reviewed by the Planning Board is not made available to the audience. He requested that handouts be provided to interested audience members.

Rubin commented that tonight’s agenda item refers to “pedestrian pathways”. The board is discussing bike routes and bike paths, which are not covered by that agenda item. Borowski apologized if he did not do an adequate job of delineating the topic in the wording of the agenda.

Sue Plummer of 21300 13 Mile Road commented that it seems like the Planning Board is looking at the mile roads for possible bikeway construction. She thinks that 13 Mile Road is an unsafe area for a bike path considering the speed of the traffic, aggressive drivers, and exhaust fumes. She mentioned that the city of Royal Oak has created a bike route that is not on the mile roads.

REVIEW DRAFT OF ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY FOR PATHWAYS

Wyrosdick stated that the first step of the pathway plan was an existing conditions analysis that identified problem areas. Research showed that there are right-of-way deficiencies, topography, and natural features that will not support certain strategies. The next element of the plan following the adoption of goals and objectives is to identify alternative strategies. Different techniques for addressing pathway systems will be discussed in order to determine which alternatives will work in the Village. It may be that a combination of techniques will work to create a cohesive and connected pathway system. Wyrosdick stated that the Planning Board will be seeing more information on alternate strategies over the next few meetings, especially in the area of traffic calming.

Wyrosdick displayed a board showing sketches and descriptions of various bikeway and pedestrian systems. She provided an overview of the techniques used to provide pedestrian/bicycle pathway systems. Wyrosdick emphasized that any pathway project must consider design alternatives and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative in order to determine the best solutions that will meet the needs and goals of the community. She discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various design techniques. Common traffic calming techniques that could be considered part of a pathway system improvement were described.

Bicycle Systems

- **Bicycle Paths:** These are paths physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and are either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-

of-way. Widths vary between five feet to eight feet depending on usage. One-way travel can be accommodated with five-foot paths while two-way travel requires eight-foot paths.

Wyrosdick stated that these paths are typically separated from pedestrians, but it can be an inclusive pedestrian and bicycle pathway if it is made wider. It would provide a direct access between neighborhoods and community facilities. Bike paths are probably the safest passages that can be provided for bicyclists. It would be a more costly approach, and the lack of right-of-way could create gaps if there is not an alternative that can be used in combination with the pathway.

- **Bicycle Lanes:** This is a portion of the roadway that has been designated by striping, signing and pavement marking for the exclusive use by bicyclists. These lanes are one-way and have a recommended width of between five feet and eight feet depending on road conditions, traffic volume and speed.

This alternative could provide direct access to destinations that can be reached by the roadways. It can usually be done in existing rights-of-way, especially if there are road improvements that can parallel the implementation of bike lanes. The disadvantage is that bicyclists are riding in the same traffic as automobiles. There are traffic-calming techniques that could be implemented to address conflicts at intersections. This alternative will not be appropriate for every road and depends on the design speed of the road, number of vehicles, etc. Another aspect of a bike lane is that it narrows the roadway thereby limiting the speed at which people will drive on that road.

- **Bicycle Routes:** These are streets with no exclusive space for bicyclists. Lanes are typically 12 feet wide and are shared by motorists and bicyclists. Speeds are usually low, at 25 mph. Signs are posted at key locations indicating the bike route for cyclists.

This is the least costly alternative and involves erecting signs. The application is limited, and it may not be the most direct route from one point to another.

Wyrosdick foresees a combination of these alternatives that will create a connected and complete pathway system.

Pedestrian Systems

- **Sidewalk:** These pedestrian paths are designed specifically for the walker. Typically, bike use is restricted or the pedestrian is given the right-of-way. Sidewalks are physically separated from motorized traffic and in some cases bicycle paths. A five-foot width is preferred to allow two-way movement of pedestrians. Materials used varies from concrete to asphalt pavement to decorative pavers.
- **Multi-use trails:** Pathways are designed for use by multiple users. Paths are wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. An open space area physically separates these pathways from motorized vehicular traffic. Widths vary between 8 feet to 12 feet and materials used vary depending on path location. Within urban areas, concrete or asphalt can be used. Rural and recreational area settings may call for a more natural material to be used, such as finely crushed limestone.

Wyrosdick thinks of multi-use trails as connections between neighborhoods that do not follow roads. A trail could be used to preserve natural beauty and landscaping. Maintenance may be an issue over a long period. It is something that needs to be thought of in connection with traditional sidewalks that follow roads.

Wyrosdick stated that the planners will provide additional ideas and design standards for the Planning Board's information over the next two or three meetings. The next step will be to apply alternatives to real solutions and arrive at recommendations to achieve the goals of the study.

Fox questioned the position of the Oakland County Road Commission on bicycle lanes and bike routes in terms of its jurisdiction over certain roads in the Village. Wyrosdick responded that the Road Commission's stance is something that needs to be considered.

Larry Needham asked if traffic rules for bicyclists using bike lanes will be similar or identical to rules for vehicles. He was informed that the Village has incorporated state statutes regarding bicyclists into its codes.

Belaustegui commented that he would like the planners to look at alternative strategies for crossing roadways to make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Wyrosdick stated that the planners will provide information on safely designed crosswalks.

REVIEW SEMCOG DRAFT REPORT ON WALKABLE COMMUNITIES AUDIT

Wyrosdick commented that the draft report received from SEMCOG is a rough outline of the walkable audit that was performed in the Village by consultants on September 16, 1999. The outline addresses some of the issues that were identified and solutions discussed during the walk along Evergreen from 13 Mile Road to Beverly Road. It emphasizes the fact that safe pedestrian crossings must be incorporated into a pathway plan.

SEMCOG will also provide generalized information on how to create a more walkable community. Wyrosdick stated that SEMCOG is hoping to send a finalized copy of the report to the Village by the end of April.

Fox commented on the safety problems at the 13 Mile and Evergreen Road area near Groves High School. She thinks that there should be a definite separation of the area past the school property going north that makes Evergreen Road slower and more residential. The concept of a traffic island to alert motorists to reduce their speed should be considered.

There is another problem during rush hour with motorists going northbound on Evergreen passing on the shoulder where cars are turning left into the high school. It is an unsafe situation. The road should either be widened to permit passing, or something should be done to impede passing on the shoulder.

Wyrosdick informed the board that she spoke to someone from the transportation department of the Birmingham School District about bussing students. The District policy is that any child within one mile of an elementary or middle school and students within 1 mile of high schools must walk except for those who must cross major roads (Lahser, Evergreen, Southfield, 13 Mile and 14 Mile Road). In general, this is the policy of the School District. Wyrosdick commented that this policy does not take into account those who would have to walk along the major roads to get to the schools but would not have to cross them.

Belaustegui remarked that the School District may have a policy, but it rarely turns down a request for a child to be bussed to school.

DISCUSSION OF PLANNING BOARD BUDGET PROCESS

Borowski stated that Belaustegui and he attended a joint meeting of the Council and Finance Committee on April 10 to review the 2000/01 budget. The Planning Board budget request was discussed.

In addition to the estimated costs for proposed priority projects identified by the Planning Board, the planning consultant budget includes \$11,400 for Birchler Arroyo's monthly fee and \$3,600 for site design review. The total budget request submitted by the Planning Board to Council and administration was \$43,810.

Belaustegui commented that the tone of the meeting was to prepare a minimalist budget due to the failure of the ballot proposal to raise the millage cap. The budget draft submitted by the Village Manager allowed a 5% increase in the amount budgeted for the planning consultant last year. The suggestion was made later during the budget session to increase the budgeted figure of \$24,937 by \$3,800. There was a consensus of Council to meet jointly with the Planning Board to discuss the priority projects and reach a consensus on the Planning Board work program for next year.

Planning Board members discussed the importance of beginning the Southfield Road corridor study before further redevelopment occurs. It was understood that this study would extend beyond a year, and the entire amount for the Southfield Road study does not have to be included in this budget.

Board members felt strongly that a joint meeting with Council should occur each year as required by the Charter. The concept of the meeting is for the Council and the Planning Board to talk about their interests and reach a consensus about joint priorities for the Planning Board. It helps to focus the Planning Board and provide Council with an understanding of what the Planning Board is doing. The Planning Board sets its priorities for the next fiscal year based on that discussion. It is incumbent on the president of Council, Village Manager, and chairperson of the Planning Board to make this meeting happen.

The joint meeting has been held in January in the past. Bliven suggested scheduling the annual joint meeting with Council for October. The Planning Board meets and gathers ideas in the summer. He maintains that a discussion with Council in October before the holidays and the Council election would set the tone and give the board an opportunity to prepare a work schedule for the next fiscal year.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

Domzal suggests that the Planning Board meet at a location closer to what it is working on as it moves forward on some of its projects.

Tillman referred to the Public Safety Department report on bicycle crashes. The report does not note what happened to the people involved. The seriousness of the accident has to be known in order to properly utilize the information. Byrwa will ask the Public Safety Department for clarification.

As a former Council member and a member of this Village, Fox understands that there is going to be a fiscal problem in Beverly Hills that must be addressed at some point in the future. The problem was anticipated when a millage cap increase was passed in 1995. Fox thinks that Council has a large task to reconcile the financial needs of the community and the restraints that have been put upon the Council. She wishes Council luck on this.

Borowski stated that he will not be able to attend the April 26 Planning Board meeting. Vice-Chairperson Belaustegui will chair the meeting.

Smith reported on two upcoming workshops. A workshop will be held on May 2 called Connecting Michigan 2000, a Second State-Wide Trailways and Greenway Conference in Midland. On May 5, there will be a talk sponsored by Apollo & Assoc. Engineers, SEMCOG, and Oakland County Planning on "Walkable Communities - Past, Present and Future".

Smith referred to an article in the March 27 issue of the *New Yorker* reviewing a book about Traditional Neighborhood Developments of New Urbanists.

Jensen questioned the reliability of the pedalcycle crash report submitted by the Public Safety Department. He commented on an article written in the New Urban News reporting on what the city of Southfield is doing with respect to its new master plan. One of the challenges is how to overcome the frequent and significant pedestrian barriers throughout the area in order to create a better pedestrian network. Jensen remarked that he thinks the Planning Board is making progress on its sidewalk study.

BUILDING OFFICIAL'S COMMENTS

Byrwa reminded members of the audience that the Village has not changed its policy on issuing information. Residents can ask for information at the Village office.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gladys Walsh of 20655 Smallwood Court commented that it is not always convenient for people to obtain the information they need at the Village office during normal business hours. She suggested erecting a bulletin board in the municipal building posting information on the important items Council or boards are discussing during a meeting. Walsh believes that people should be able to

express their opinions at board meetings, and members should listen to everyone's viewpoint without criticism.

Walsh commented on the Council budget session and the need for fiscal responsibility. She thinks that the Village needs people on its Council and boards that are interested in what is important for the Village as a whole. Walsh believes that all residents need to become more active in listening to the Council and expressing their views on the issues before the Village.

Jack Fahlen of 30295 Marimoor Road commented that he decided to attend tonight's Planning Board meeting after the close of business at the Village office. It would have added to his knowledge of the Planning Board discussion if he had a copy of the material being reviewed by the board. Borowski stated that his point is well taken.

Pam Murdock of 30414 Georgetown asked if there is any truth to the rumor that the property just north of the bank on Lahser Road was donated to the Village to be a park. She was informed that the property owner offered to donate the parcel to the Village with certain conditions attached to it. After serious consideration, the Council concluded that the Village was not able to meet all of the conditions of the offer.

MOTION by Tillman, supported by Fox, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Motion passes unanimously.

Carry over items:

- 1- Entranceway signs (10-27-99)
- 2 - Bikeways, walkways and pedestrian safety study (11-11-99).

Motions made by Planning Board to be acted upon by Council:

3-8-00: Recommend approval of Minor Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments.

3-8-00: Submit cost estimates for year 2000 Planning Board priorities to Council for approval.

**Vincent Borowski, Chairperson
Planning Board**

**Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk**