

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

Absent: Borowski

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

Vice-Chairperson Belaustegui called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Village municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as printed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE PUBLISHED AGENDA

Norman Rubin of 31020 Rivers Edge Court thanked Byrwa and administration for the material provided to him for tonight's meeting.

Belaustegui stated that the Village policy will be to provide people with written material relevant to a particular meeting if they contact the Village office and make those arrangements. The information will be available before or at the meeting.

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION by Bliven, supported by Jensen, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on Wednesday, April 12, 2000 be approved as submitted.

Motion passes unanimously.

REVIEW REVISED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PATHWAY STUDY

The planning consultant has revised the goals and objectives of the pathway study to reflect the discussion at the last Planning Board meeting. There are three principle goals - safety, attractive system and useful and connected system.

REVIEW ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR PATHWAY STUDY

The material distributed for tonight's meeting expands on the prior handout regarding alternative strategies for pathways and includes more plans and schematics. At last month's meeting, different alternatives were reviewed for bike paths, bike lanes, and bike routes and also for specific pedestrian pathways such as sidewalks and multi-use pathways that interconnect neighborhoods. Wyrosdick commented that Birchler Arroyo is bringing alternative strategies forth for discussion so that the Planning Board can determine how some of these approaches can be used to create an entire connected system for the Village.

Wyrosdick presented several traffic calming techniques that could be considered in conjunction with the pathway alternatives. Many of the traffic calming techniques put pedestrians as a priority when they are implemented. She displayed boards with diagrams that depict traffic calming techniques.

Wyrosdick described a traffic diverter technique that works to reroute traffic and discourage cut-through traffic. A typical diverter consists of raised barriers placed diagonally across an intersection forcing traffic to turn.

There are a variety of ways to narrow street widths as a traffic calming technique including lane striping, on-street parking, rebuilding the street to narrow width throughout roadway, and mid-block and intersection bulb-outs. The objective is to reduce the speed of vehicles and encourage a pedestrian environment. Bulbing out the curb provides a shorter distance for pedestrians to cross at an intersection. Motorists see the narrowing of the road and know to slow down. It can be used as a gateway feature for commercial areas or schools.

Changes in pavement such as raised crosswalks or use of textured materials are techniques designed to reduce speeds, improve pedestrian visibility and reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. These methods slow traffic approaching an intersection and narrow the width that pedestrians or cyclists have to cross the street. The technique could be used to provide an entranceway into a special area.

Wyrosdick hopes to start talking about alternative solutions at the next meeting. The next element of the pathway plan is to apply strategies and design techniques to the focus areas. She also intends to bring the board information on what surrounding communities have done as far as pedestrian and bicycle pathways. Wyrosdick commented on a map distributed to the board entitled "City of Novi Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan".

Belaustegui mentioned a couple of traffic calming techniques that were not discussed. There are two versions of traffic islands that are used extensively in Europe. Crosswalks on a road that is more than two lanes often have a traffic island where pedestrians can stop before proceeding to cross the street. Another alternative is a roundabout. This method of traffic calming has been suggested for the Evergreen and Wilshire intersection by the planner who conducted the walkable communities audit in the Village. Belaustegui stated that both of these types of traffic islands are used near schools to avoid traffic problems and provide a safe haven. It was noted that this is a fairly expensive alternative.

Wyrosdick stated that information on both of the traffic island alternatives will be presented at the next meeting.

Fox suggested that another place where a traffic island would be useful to slow people down would be going west on 14 Mile Road crossing Southfield to Saxon. She proposes that a representative of the Oakland County Road Commission attend a Planning Board meeting to present an update on the proposed reconstruction of 14 Mile Road between Southfield and Greenfield Roads.

Domzal commented that the Planning Board has worked on goals and objectives and has reviewed information presented by the planning consultant and board members. He questioned how all the material received will be placed in a comprehensive report. Belaustegui responded that the next agenda item will be a discussion of a focus area work plan.

Wyrosdick stated that the plan is taking shape as we go along. Her intent was to give the Planning Board as much information as possible that might be of use when the board begins to put a plan in place within the focus areas that are selected.

DISCUSSION OF FOCUS AREA WORK PLAN

Belaustegui commented that the Planning Board is moving forward in its work plan for the pathway study. It has looked at existing conditions, talked about goals and objectives, and reviewed alternative strategies. He thinks that the board needs to agree on the focus areas and begin to discuss how to apply the tools that have been discussed to those areas to develop an entire pedestrian pathway network.

The Planning Board talked about focus areas early in the process. The planning consultant identified potential areas of concern on a map entitled "Pedestrian Pathways Focus Areas". Additional information was submitted by board members. Belaustegui and Bliven compiled data showing existing conditions and lot lines. A map was prepared to show a one mile radius from the major destinations, which were thought to be the schools. Domzal provided a synopsis and conclusions following his bike ride throughout the western portion of the Village. Board members discussed connections between the neighborhoods and modifications were suggested to the original focus areas. It is appropriate at this time for the board to make a decision on focus areas to include in a pathway plan.

Belaustegui displayed a large version of a color-coded focus area map provided by Birchler Arroyo. He outlined the potential areas of study proposed by the planning consultants along with the detail areas and interconnections discussed by the board. Belaustegui would like the board to discuss what it feels should be the areas of study. He placed a piece of vellum over the map in order to designate the focus areas that represent the collective view of the board.

Board members expanded on the original focus areas. They looked at the entire Village with respect to developing a comprehensive pathway plan that would establish safe connections between destinations in the community and provide safe pedestrian crossings.

Board members were able to identify a number of existing trail systems that are used by people in order to avoid crossing or walking on major roads. Several dangerous pedestrian movements and trouble spots were identified. Board members recognized that there are crossing places throughout the Village that are not at intersections, and they will consider ways to make these areas safer.

There was discussion about establishing routes from within neighborhoods to reach schools without using the major roads. The board will consider asphalt or concrete easements to link neighborhoods or connect neighborhoods to community facilities in logical areas rather than constructing sidewalks on all the major roads. It was suggested that part of this study should be the identification of ways to get through and around the community.

Planning Board members identified major focus areas that will represent areas of study. The end product will be a master plan for the whole community.

Wyrosdick summarized the focus areas identified by the board and the issues involved in each area. She thinks that the Planning Board is doing a good job of master planning a pathway system. It appears that the pathway plan will look at filling in the gaps and compliment that with internal connections and pedestrian safety recommendations. The board has identified problems that it feels the Village needs to address. The next step is to review alternative solutions and decide where they need to be applied. Wyrosdick and Belaustegui will revise the focus area map based on tonight's discussion.

Belaustegui worked with the board to prioritize the focus areas that have been identified so that the Planning Board can begin to work on the priority areas. It was suggested that the board invite interested parties when it focuses on a specific area.

Smith asked Council liaison Walsh if things have changed since the 1985 bike path study was undertaken by the Village. Walsh responded that the problems are the same. He noted that until recently the main thrust of the current sidewalk study has been to construct sidewalks on major roads. The Planning Board is now looking at connecting neighborhoods using internal sidewalks with crossings on major roads. There is focus on problem intersections. He encourages creative approaches that do not involve sidewalks on all major roads.

Gladys Walsh of 20655 Smallwood commented that Beverly Hills is an established community that offers a wide variety of living styles. There are areas with and without sidewalks. She maintains that people bought homes in the western part of the Village in order to have privacy and minimal traffic going through their neighborhoods. She does not think that Beverly Hills has to be a walkable community.

Gladys Walsh expressed some concern that opening the community with pathways through the center of the Village could compromise the security of residents and lead to increased crime. She understands the concern about pedestrian safety but thinks that the Village should be looking at need also.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

Tillman commented that she looks forward to continuing with the pathway master plan and arriving at alternatives for implementing the problem areas identified.

Domzal observed the need for proper entrance signage at the Beverly Hills Village limits. He questioned whether the Planning Board can start moving on the entrance sign project while working on the sidewalk plan. Robiner has been compiling ideas for Village entrance signage.

Belaustegui stated that the entranceway work is a priority project that can begin after the Planning Board budget is adopted by Council for the next fiscal year.

Fox suggested that adding plantings at the entranceways would provide unification and help give the Village an identity. For example, plantings along the sidewalk on Greenfield Road will give the east side an identity. The same concept would work along other areas where there is signage.

Smith asked about the status of gates in the Village. Belaustegui stated that a gate attached to poles with no fencing is considered an accessory structure. If a gate is attached to a fence that meets all the fence regulations, it is just a part of the fence. The Village Zoning Ordinance does not legislate gates.

Byrwa updated the board on the status of legal proceedings relative to a gate erected in a front yard on 13 Mile Road in violation of the ordinance.

Smith suggested that administration include e-mail addresses on the handout that lists board members' names and addresses.

Smith questioned whether the Village or planning consultant has received a copy of the final version of the SEMCOG report on the walkable communities audit conducted in the Village last September.

He was informed that this report has not been received by Wyrosdick or Byrwa. Walsh, who is the SEMCOG delegate from the Village, will check on the status of this report.

Smith stated that Township trustee Jack Fahlen commented at the last Township board meeting that geese are creating a pollution problem for the Rouge River. It was indicated that communities are asking their residents not to feed the geese.

Smith asked Byrwa to provide updated information on three pages from the 1985 bike path feasibility study (pages 18, 22 and 33).

Bliven recommended that consideration be given to entrance signage that says, "Welcome to Beverly Hills - Speeding Tickets Cheerfully Given".

Belaustegui asked Planning Board members if they are available for a joint meeting with Council on Thursday, June 1 at 7:00 p.m. All members present except Smith are available on this date.

Belaustegui commented that it has been suggested by this board that an October joint meeting date be included in next year's Village calendar.

The Oakland County Road Commission is preparing to start its \$4 million project to improve Southfield Road in July running through the middle of November. The section of road in Lathrup Village from Mt. Vernon to 12 Mile Road will be taken down to the base and rebuilt. The work on the portion of Southfield Road from 13 Mile to 14 Mile Road will involve grinding and repaving. There will be discussion on this project at a public meeting on Wednesday, May 3 at 6:30 p.m. at the Lathrup Village Municipal Building. Three Planning Board members indicated that they may be able to attend.

MOTION by Fox, supported by Robiner, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:45 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.

**Robert Belaustegui, Vice-Chairperson
Planning Board**

**Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk**