

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

Absent: Tillman

Also Present: Building official, Byrwa  
Planning consultant, Wyrosdick  
Council Liaison, Walsh  
Assistant to the Manager, Pasieka

Chairperson Fox 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 approved as published.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE PUBLISHED AGENDA**

Janet Mooney of 19111 Devonshire has observed that a number of homeowners are placing large rocks along their property lines. Some have cemented in these rocks at a height which far surpasses curb height. She understands why people are doing this, but it is a potential safety hazard. Mooney asked whether this is a matter that the Planning Board can review and possibly recommend restrictions to Council.

Fox asked Byrwa to look into whether this practice is in violation of current ordinances. If it is an ordinance violation, it is an enforcement and administrative problem. If the matter needs to be addressed with an ordinance, Council could refer it to the Planning Board.

### **APPROVE MINUTES**

MOTION by Bliven, supported by Smith, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on Wednesday, July 26, 2000 be approved as submitted.

Motion passes unanimously.

Fox stated that she made a comment at the July 26 meeting about the Berkshire School cell tower being a \$400,000 contract. She clarified that it is a \$400,000 contract with OmniPoint for four poles, with some at Groves High School.

### **DISCUSSION WITH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEMBERS ON VILLAGE PATHWAYS**

Fox related that the Planning Board is finalizing its pathway plan and is looking for comments and suggestions from the Parks and Recreation Board, particularly on issues that it has in common with Parks and Recreation. She asked Wyrosdick to lead the discussion.

Planning consultant Wyrosdick from Birchler Arroyo presented the background of the pathways plan that the Planning Board has been working on for a number of months. The board started this planning process by looking at existing conditions with regard to pedestrian access and pathways. They identified problem areas and designated focal points in the community where people want to walk. The Planning Board set goals for what it wanted to achieve in a pedestrian path system.

The first and foremost goal is safety. The Planning Board is looking at what improvements to the pedestrian pathway system can be recommended that will improve safety for children walking to schools. There are currently gaps in existing sidewalks and problem areas that need to be addressed. Another goal is to propose pathway systems that are attractive and add value to the Village.

The Planning Board studied how to fix the problems that were identified. Various design alternatives were reviewed for crosswalks, traffic calming techniques, sidewalks, and multi-purpose pathways. There were discussions as to the most appropriate places to implement these measures according to the established goals. The Planning Board reached the stage of prioritizing its recommendations.

They discussed what the Village should do first in terms of future planning or capital improvement programs. Secondary priorities were identified that would enhance the Village pathway system.

Recreational facilities were a large part of the discussion. The Planning Board thought that it should receive the input of the Parks and Recreation Board before it makes any priority recommendations in the area of parks and recreation. Planning Board members want to know if their recommendations are in line with the Park Board's future plans for the parks and nature preserves. If the pathway recommendations are not addressing problems that the Parks and Recreation Board foresees, there may be a need to add to the priority list.

There are three areas that the Planning Board would like to discuss with Parks and Recreation Board members: Douglas-Evans nature preserve, Hidden Rivers nature preserve, and Beverly Park. Wyrosdick used a large map on display to illustrate the areas being discussed.

Some of the preliminary priority recommendations focus on providing a path system that would allow pedestrians to safely access the Douglas-Evans nature preserve. Douglas-Evans is not accessible by sidewalk for anyone who wishes to walk in the park. There has been conversation that there might be a need for a bike rack so that bicyclists can park their bikes on the outskirts of the park.

The Hidden Rivers nature preserve was looked at because of the difficulty in accessing this area. A current public right-of-way that exists has been usurped by the residents who live on both sides of that right-of-way. The board discussed the possibility of opening up the dead end at Sunnyslope to a pedestrian pathway to provide better access to Hidden Rivers. A bike facility for the Hidden Rivers nature preserve has been suggested.

There are sidewalks in and around Beverly Park. The Planning Board recommends improving the crossings at Beverly Park in conjunction with what the Parks and Recreation Board has planned for improvements in the park master plan.

The Planning Board asked Parks and Recreation Board members for their thoughts on these ideas. Board members present were Davis, Mooney, O'Reilly and Schmitt.

In response to a comment, Fox clarified that the Planning Board is not proposing a pathway in the Hidden River nature preserve. They are recommending pedestrian access at 14 Mile and Sunnyslope where there is an easement along what would be 14 Mile Road if it went through. Consideration could be given to installing a bike rack there for people who want to walk into the nature preserve.

Fox remarked that the pathway proposed on Evergreen Road would not necessarily be a concrete sidewalk. There is consensus on this board that there are places where a sidewalk would not be a reasonable alternative. It has been suggested that a soft pathway of some type be installed to allow people to walk to the entrance to Douglas Evans and to complete a route on Evergreen Road. The terrain is not conducive to constructing a four feet wide standard sidewalk along that area.

Mooney questioned whether access to the nature preserves should be a priority. She thinks that people who want to enter Hidden Rivers or Douglas Evans find a way to do so. Mooney suggests that the first priority should be connecting the schools with sidewalk.

Schmitt thinks the sidewalk along Evergreen Road is a great idea. It is treacherous to walk or bicycle anywhere in that area. He supports the idea of a bike rack at Douglas Evans. There may be a problem with deed restrictions, but the Village may be able to approach the donor and ask permission to locate a bike rack there. Schmitt also suggested replacing the existing gate with a more user friendly entrance gate. The current gate discourages people from entering public property. He added that the gate could be moved back five feet from the bridge to enable people to walk around it.

Schmitt expressed the view that the Parks and Recreation Board has enough projects without getting involved with Hidden Rivers at this point.

Domzal referred to Attorney Ryan's opinion letter dated April 7, 1997 regarding the question of establishing trails at the Hidden Rivers and Douglas Evans properties. He asked if there is any environmental reason that the Village does not want people in these areas.

Schmitt stated that there is no environmental reason for prohibiting paths in the nature preserves. He recalled that a woodchip path was discussed for Douglas Evans before the Ryan's opinion was received. He noted that the current technique is to put down a hard path such as asphalt, which is more environmentally friendly over the course of time than general paths because they do not require maintenance.

Fox asked if the plan for the crosswalk at Beverly Park is to move the present crosswalk from the position it is in now, and does it encompass a new design.

Schmitt stated that Dave Jensen designed the new park entrance, which has a plan for the crosswalk into Beverly Park. The entranceway plan requires moving the sidewalk and crosswalk to the west side of Norchester at Beverly Road to accommodate the new park pedestrian entrance. It is anticipated that bids on the new entrance will go out in the spring.

Parks and Recreation board members commented on the importance of having sidewalk on 14 Mile Road east of Berkshire School and also on Thirteen Mile Road west of Groves High School.

Robiner stated that he reviewed the opinion letter from Tom Ryan as it relates to the Douglas Evans property. The deed contains the wording, "No structure or improvement, including but not limited to, building, parking lot, hard top roads or paths, etc. ..". Robiner reads this as saying that something other than a hard top path is allowed.

Schmitt said that the Ryan states in the letter that "it is clear in the recitals regarding the property being left in its natural state and referring to hard top roads or paths that the Village cannot and may not establish trails and maintain trails on the Douglas Evans property."

Belaustegui understands that the priority for Parks and Recreation right now is Beverly Park. He asked for clarification of the Parks and Recreation Board's opinion on encouraging the use of the Douglas Evans nature preserve. Schmitt stated that the Parks and Recreation Board would like people to be able to access the Hidden Rivers nature preserve.

Belaustegui discerns from the discussion with Parks and Recreation Board members that there is no energy to pursue access to Hidden Rivers at this time. There is interest in improving the soft use of Douglas Evans by providing some sort of access to it such as bike rack or parking lot.

Fox stated that it appears from the opinion letter from Tom Ryan that cement work for a bike rack would be allowed on the Douglas Evans property. She asked if there is anything that would prohibit placing a bike rack in the right-of-way in front of the gate.

Byrwa stated that it is a Village right-of-way and installation of bike rack would require review and approval by Council. A plan should be reviewed to make sure that the structure would not create obstructions or problems to vehicular traffic.

Domzal commented on the good condition of the woodchip trail in Beverly Park. That type of construction may be appropriate in the nature preserve if the former owners of Douglas Evans could be convinced to permit that kind of trail.

Schmitt stated that additional wood chips have to be laid on the path once a year. He noted that a woodchip path is not handicap accessible.

Fox opened the floor to public comments with respect to those areas that involve the parks and nature areas.

Frank Worrell of 32123 Bellvine Trail questioned the difference in terminology between a sidewalk and a path. He cannot distinguish from the plan where the board is recommending a pathway or a sidewalk.

Wyrosdick responded that the Planning Board uses the term path because it is looking at alternatives other than concrete sidewalks. The board has talked about recommending a soft path constructed of wood chips or crushed limestone in more sensitive areas of the Village such as near the Douglas Evans nature preserve. The term path is also used in the study because the plan includes intersections and pedestrian crossings. The plan is intended to look at a number of pedestrian safety issues.

### **REVIEW VILLAGE PATHWAY PRIORITIES**

Wyrosdick stated that at its last meeting the Planning Board discussed which recommendations should be on the plan and which should be removed. Priorities were assigned based on which improvements will add to the safety and value of the pedestrian system within the Village. Wyrosdick has prepared and distributed a revised map that identifies the priority items that the Planning Board feel are important elements and should be included in the plan. The plan also includes improvements that would add value to the entire pedestrian system if the priority items were in place.

Board members discussed the preferred recommendations and suggested further refinements to the plan and the accompanying text. Wyrosdick will incorporate these changes into a revised document.

Fox expressed concern that there is nothing in the written recommendations or maps about identifying bike routes by signage. She would like to see signage that shows a bike route linking up the schools and other destinations. Bike route signs put drivers on alert that there are likely to be bikers about.

Domzal commented on the time the Planning Board has spend researching and studying this topic. He suggested compiling the key documents and important information that has gone into the development of this pathway plan. The documents include tools and techniques, study area notes, preferred recommendations, minutes of meetings, prior studies, right-of-way maps, etc.

Fox agrees that there should be reference made at the public meeting to all the documents that this board referred to in preparing the pathway plan. These items should be identified and available for public review.

Wyrosdick will provide copies of the current plan to the public at that meeting. She suggested displaying boards that summarize the different elements of the plan in a graphic and pictorial manner prior to the public discussion. These boards could be placed on display for review in the Village municipal building entryway for two weeks prior to the public meeting.

Belaustegui commented that the topic of funding will come up at the public meeting. The Planning Board should clarify its position on discussing funding of project costs.

Fox expressed the view that it is not the function of the Planning Board to discuss funding. The purpose of this board is to suggest what it thinks is best for the community to make accessibility and pathways safer, particularly for children. It is Council's responsibility to decide how and if it can fund the pathway plan.

The board discussed the issue of providing cost estimates to the public. It was agreed that financing is a different issue than cost. The majority of board members did not think it would be inappropriate in the discussion phase to provide cost estimates of projects at today's prices. It was indicated that these figures may be available through Bloomfield Township. Bloomfield Township recently passed a special millage to construct sidewalks and would have current cost estimates. Village Public Services Director will be requested to obtain cost estimates for sidewalks and crosswalks.

Jensen thinks that there should be some recognition in the plan of what the Village has done in the past with respect to sidewalk construction and shared costs.

Wyrosdick will talk to Spallasso about acquiring cost estimates for sidewalk and crosswalk construction.

Fox called a recess at 9:00 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 9:10 p.m.

Fox recognized members of the public who would like to comment on the Village pathway priorities.

Alda Marie Cook of 19370 Riverside Drive questioned the definition of path as it relates to the deed restrictions for the Hidden Rivers nature preserve. Robiner explained his earlier comment relative to his interpretation of the deed restriction wording that refers to hard top roads or paths. Fox interjected that there are no plans to pursue any improvements in Hidden Rivers.

Art Liberty agrees that the pathway presentation should include costs.

Frank Worrell mentioned sidewalk studies and cost estimates that have been prepared by Public Services Director Spallasso. He does not think that it is within the Planning Board's authority to get into cost or funding. He agrees with the recommendation to have the Village engineer at the public discussion to address cost estimates.

#### **DISCUSS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CROSSWALK DESIGN**

Wyrosdick is prepared to discuss preliminary recommendations for design of crosswalks at major intersections. In addition, Birchler Arroyo has determined the best route for a sidewalk combined with an alternative pathway system on Evergreen Road.

Wyrosdick displayed pictures of the intersections at 14 Mile and Lahser and 13 Mile and Lahser. She suggested simple design techniques that could greatly improve those areas. The current crosswalks have been worn away and are not very prominent to pedestrians.

There are no sidewalks at 14 Mile and Lasher that connect to the crosswalk except a new section installed by Bloomfield Township. The crosswalk leads into a curb. There are pedestrian lights that indicate when it is safe to cross.

The basic standard design in the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices calls for a two- stripes crosswalk at intersections where there is a high volume of vehicle traffic and appropriate signage to identify the crosswalk. The County generally uses the minimum standard with minimum width of crossing line. The Village could widen the painted crosswalk stripe, which would greatly improve the crossing.

There is a crosswalk at 13 Mile and Lahser from the west side to the east side of Lahser that connects three sidewalks. There is no sidewalk on Detroit Country Day School property and no crosswalk from the north side of 13 Mile Road to DCDS. However, there is a pedestrian light that indicates when it is safe to cross where there is no crosswalk. If the intent is to have people cross at crosswalks, the sign should not be directed in that fashion.

Wyrosdick concluded that the overall design of these crosswalks can be fairly standard. These intersections are used for vehicular traffic and do not have a high level of pedestrian traffic. The planners suggest that using the maximum standard would greatly benefit these crosswalks. It is recommended to have consistent signage at the two intersections.

Domzal remarked that this is an improvement that could be referred to the Public Services Director as soon as possible.

Belaustegui suggested that the left turn movement of the traffic signals at both of these intersections should be investigated. It is a high accident area.

Wyrosdick discussed the three crossings at Beverly Road that have been identified by the Planning Board. They are located at Waltham, Beverly Park, and Beverly School. Birchler Arroyo's traffic

engineer recommends zebra markings for crosswalks of this nature. It is identifiable, and the stripes could be widened to be more visible. The walks could be raised or depressed as a traffic calming techniques if needed.

The crossings at Groves High School were discussed at length. Wyrosdick indicated that Spallasso has talked to school officials in an attempt to initiate movement to improve the crossing at GHS at Waltham. The school is not willing to take any action. They choose to leave the intersection at 13 Mile and Evergreen as the preferred crossing area.

Wyrosdick used illustrations to outline design problems at the school with respect to crossings, sidewalk connections, driveway use, and fencing. She presented short term and long term alternative solutions. The Planning Board agreed that it wants a well designed crosswalk rather than a band aid approach.

Belaustegui thinks that this is a PTA issue that involves kids at risk. Jensen commented that it will be useful to have a master plan that identifies concerns. The Village can ask the school if it would like to work together on a safe crosswalk.

Wyrosdick suggested that the pathway plan be specific as to the location of the crosswalk and make general recommendations regarding the design of the crosswalk at Groves High School.

Wyrosdick stated that the 13 Mile and Fairfax crosswalk is another area where zebra striping would make sense. There is a pedestrian button activated the crosswalk signal at this location. There are sidewalk improvements that could be done.

There has been discussion about the best location for a sidewalk on Evergreen Road between Ronsdale and Riverside. Wyrosdick displayed pictorial examples of why the west side of the road makes more sense for a pathway. There is more right-of-way and the topography is better. There are ways to get around the trees with concrete or an alternative path. A photograph depicts where there is subdivision fencing that encroaches into the public right-of-way. Wyrosdick suggested that there is room for a sidewalk behind the fencing.

Wyrosdick stated that the planners spent some time in the area trying to identify the rights-of-way at Ronsdale and Wilshire. She talked about the sidewalk situation at this ill designed four-way stop.

Wyrosdick will come to the next meeting with recommendations for crossings at Embassy, Waltham, Fairfax, and Saxon.

Belaustegui asked if the Planning Board is interested in involving the parent teacher organizations of the schools in its deliberations on sidewalks and crosswalks. It was agreed that the PTA officers of the affected schools and neighborhood homeowner associations will receive a notice of the public meeting that will be held at the second meeting in September or first meeting in October.

#### **REVIEW PRELIMINARY PLAN FOR VILLAGE SIGNS**

Jensen presented a drawing of a type of sign that he recommends that the Village consider for the area outside of the municipal office between the sidewalk and the street. A similar sign with a different and lower post is proposed for the public safety building.

Jensen recommends this sign because it is versatile and simple. It has the ability to be embellished to add different motifs to the center of the sign. The design could be expanded for use at the Village entryways with a more simple post. If this design were adopted, he would recommend it be repeated at Beverly Park.

Robiner commented that he brought the booklet of photos he prepared showing what other communities have done with signage. If the board approves the design presented by Jensen, he would hope that it could be modified into a Village gateway sign.

Board members expressed their various views on the proposed sign. Belaustegui thinks it is a good idea and consistent with the Village if the sign is constructed of cast iron. Board members suggested that the letters be clear and distinct.

The Planning Board will have Village entrance signs on an upcoming agenda for discussion.

#### **PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS**

Bliven observed that Beverly School erected a construction sign in the Village right-of-way on Beverly Road. Byrwa will look into this.

Bliven proposed that the Planning Board begin its study of "big foot" development as it applies to residential site design and redevelopment standards, which is a study item carried over from last year. There are other items on this year's work program that could be addressed soon.

Smith referred to a letter addressed to the Planning Board from Julie Kaucke on Stafford with regard to the construction of large, unattached garages in her neighborhood. She also objects to a fence that is proposed to be constructed on the property east of her home.

Byrwa stated that the issue of large unattached garages in the Village was considered but not included on the list of Planning Board priorities.

The board requested that administration contact Mrs. Kaucke and inform her that there has been a change in the fence ordinance and that the accessory buildings in her neighborhood are within the ordinance requirements.

Smith referred to the regular Council meeting minutes of August 7 at which time legal counsel for Detroit Country Day School stated that there is no fill or other material being taken onto the school property. Smith stated that he observed nine truck loads of dirt put onto the property. The school's legal counsel made another statement with regarding to school officials misinterpreting the ordinance requirements because they were not excavating or bringing in earth. Smith presented background information on the recent situation involving grading at Detroit Country Day School.

Fox asked that the Planning Board members receive a copy of the 1998 grading plan for Detroit Country Day School.

Smith informed the board that Stan Pasiaka has completed his Master's Degree in public administration at Oakland University. He has done his thesis on the flow chart and organization chart for this community. Public copies are available from Pasiaka.

Fox stated that the Village of Beverly Hills has joined to intervene as a party plaintiff in a legal action that Bloomfield Township has filed against the Birmingham Public Schools. The initiative for that action was a cell tower planned to be erected at Covington School. Bloomfield Township's attorney went to court today to obtain a temporary restraining order.

The Beverly Hills Council voted 4-3 to support this litigation and intervene on the legal issue with respect to cell tower construction being undertaken by the School District.

Fox announced that basic planning and zoning classes are being offered by the Michigan Municipal League Education Program in September and October. Interested members should contact Fox.

At the next meeting, Fox would like to talk about taking advantage of an upcoming seminar entitled, "Reinventing the Strip". Wyrosdick was asked to begin once a month training sessions offered by Birchler Arroyo at the next meeting.

#### **PLANNING CONSULTANT'S COMMENTS**

Wyrosdick stated that Birchler Arroyo learned today that it has been awarded for the third year in a row the Outstanding Planning Project Award from the Michigan Society of Planning Officials. In addition, Karen Fashway, who finished her Master's Degree in December, has received the Outstanding Student Planning Project award from MSPO for a project she did through Wayne State.

**BUILDING OFFICIAL'S PROJECT**

Byrwa met with the architect at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs today about the ongoing construction project. The community center is near completion and they are working on the school addition. Byrwa informed the board of a minor modification to the site plan proposed by the architect. It is proposed to add four parking spaces to supplement existing parking. Drainage will not be affected. The area is now a grass area in the interior of the lot next to the chapel. Byrwa does not think this is a change that warrants a full review with 25 sets of drawings.

There was discussion on how to proceed. In answer to an inquiry, Byrwa stated that there is an ordinance requirement that this site plan change be brought to the Planning Board before it is approved. He maintains that some discretion can be used on certain issues when the scope of the project does not warrant putting the applicant through the entire site plan review process.

Bliven agreed that this should not have an effect on the overall site plan. He would treat this as a construction bulletin. Members of the board expressed the view that this change does not warrant a new site plan review.

MOTION by Belaustegui, supported by Borowski, that it has been brought to the attention of the Planning Board that there has been a minor change to the Queen of Martyrs project to add two handicap and two regular parking spaces. The Planning Board's recommendation is that it be approved without requiring further site review.

Fox thought it was inappropriate to vote on amending a site plan without this matter being a posted agenda item.

Roll Call Vote:  
Borowski - yes  
Domzal - yes  
Fox - no  
Jensen - yes  
Robiner - no  
Smith - no  
Belaustegui - yes  
Bliven - yes

Motion passes (5 - 3).

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Walsh reported that Council's public hearing on the Kensington Academy addition went smoothly. There were positive comments from everyone on the outstanding job done on the site plan.

MOTION by Smith, supported by Borowski, to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 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:**

8/23/00: Motion that a minor change to the OLQM site plan be approved without requiring further site plan review.

**Sharon Mullin Fox, Chairperson  
Planning Board**

**Ellen E. Marshall  
Village Clerk**

