

Present: Chairperson Jensen; Members: Bliven, Hayes, Nedley, Tillman, Smith and Woodrow

Absent: Borowski and Schneiders

Also Present: Building Official, Byrwa
Planning Consultant, Wyrosdick
Council Liaison, Downey
Council Member, Pfeifer

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Woodrow asked that the agenda be amended to allow him to address the board regarding the Roma lot split.

MOTION by Bliven, seconded by Tillman, to add item 7A, “Roma Lot Split – Woodrow”.
Motion passes unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE PUBLISHED AGENDA

No one in the audience wished to be heard.

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION by Bliven, seconded by Hayes, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on Wednesday, November 14, 2001 be approved as submitted.

Motion passes unanimously.

REVIEW LETTER FROM BOB DECORTE ON SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY AND SAFETY FOR EVERGREEN ROAD

Board members received a letter from Robert DeCorte, engineer with the Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County, and a cover letter from Village Public Services Director Spallasso. DeCorte was asked to address safety issues with respect to a proposed pedestrian pathway on the west side of Evergreen Road between Riverside Drive and Beverly Road.

Jensen related that a meeting was held in October with planning consultants Wyrosdick and Birchler, Village Manager Murphy, Planning Board chair Jensen, Spallasso, and DeCorte to review and discuss an engineering plan for construction of a sidewalk along 14 Mile Road and the west side of Evergreen Road that was prepared by the Village in 1997. The Planning Board invited residents who live along Evergreen Road from Riverside to Beverly as well as homeowners on Quail Ridge, Old Pond Court, Wellesley and Village Drive to its October 24 meeting for a public discussion of a connector pathway in that area.

Wyrosdick related that she spoke with DeCorte about alternatives for pathways along Evergreen Road and found that they were approaching the issue in the same way. If there is an alternative path, it would be to provide sidewalk on Evergreen Road from 14 Mile to Riverside and fill in existing gaps in the Riverside sidewalk. Pedestrians would then cross Evergreen at Riverside,

proceed through the neighborhood to Beverly, and cross Evergreen again. Residents would not have a complete connection along Evergreen Road or access to the Douglas Evans nature preserve. DeCorte made the point that it would be much safer to have pedestrians and bicyclists stay on an Evergreen Road pathway rather than to cross Evergreen twice.

Bliven mentioned that DeCorte recommends an eight foot wide pathway in his letter. Wyrosdick commented that eight feet is generally the minimum recommended width for a dual function walk for pedestrians and cyclists. However, this is an implementation aspect of the plan.

Tillman concurs with the traffic expert relative to safety issues with crossing Evergreen Road twice. While the Planning Board should be sensitive to the fact that a portion of Evergreen Road is a natural beauty road, she thinks that the board has a duty to the Village to encourage a plan that encompasses the entire Village and provides connectivity.

Pfeifer voiced safety concerns about a pathway on Evergreen Road due to the configuration of the road and the fact that it is a main road with high traffic volumes. In addition, there are a number of subdivisions along that route with ingress and egress solely onto Evergreen Road. Pfeifer is concerned about adequate room on the road for public safety vehicles considering the tight right-of-way. She questions the advisability of combining both pedestrian and bicycle traffic in that particular area.

Pfeifer recalled that the Planning Board had talked about recommending a soft path along a portion of Evergreen Road that would provide pedestrians with access to Douglas Evans nature preserve. A soft path would be seasonable and not require clearing in the winter. She questioned whether the board would consider directing bicycle traffic down Riverside to connect with Beverly Road and then Evergreen and providing a soft pathway on Evergreen Road for pedestrians.

REVIEW TRAFFIC COUNTS AND ACCIDENT REPORTS ON EVERGREEN ROAD

The Planning Board asked that administration provide traffic counts and an accident report on Evergreen Road. Spallasso reported on Evergreen Road traffic counts in his letter of November 26, 2001. Data from 1996 counts on Evergreen Road between 13 Mile and Beverly indicate 8,907 vehicles during a 24 hour period. More recent counts at the intersection of Evergreen and 14 Mile show 11,186 vehicles on Evergreen south of 14 Mile Road during a 24 hour period. A traffic count on Evergreen Road north of 13 Mile Road recorded 11,000 vehicles in 1989 and 8,900 in 1996.

Pfeifer provided some history on Evergreen Road traffic volumes. The opening of I-696 relieved the mile road traffic but also created traffic on feeder roads leading to the freeway. In the early 1980's there was discussion about widening Evergreen Road. Residents pursued the natural beauty road designation for a portion of Evergreen Road to forestall widening or future development along that road. The speed limit was reduced to 25 m.p.h. as part of that designation and also due to the curvature of Evergreen Road. Pfeifer noted that few motorists observe the 25 m.p.h. speed limit.

Downey commented on the speed of the traffic on Evergreen Road and suggested that the use of traffic calming techniques be implemented to make that road safer.

It was mentioned that there are fences that encroach into the road right-of-way on Evergreen south of Riverside. Tillman suggested the possibility of installing a pathway behind the fences. Wyrosdick interjected that the 1997 sidewalk plan shows the sidewalk going behind the fence.

Jensen stated that a memo from Director of Public Safety Woodard states that there were no pedestrian accidents and one bicycle accident occurring in 1995 within a 10 year period for Evergreen Road between 13 and 14 Mile Roads. The bicyclist sustained no major injury.

The letters from Spallasso, DeCorte, and Woodard will be made part of the Planning Board's report to Council on the feasibility of a pathway along Evergreen Road.

REVIEW PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED REPORT FROM BIRCHLER ARROYO ON EVERGREEN STUDY (COMMENTS AND ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS) FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES AND MODIFICATIONS

Jensen referred to the comprehensive report dated November 13, 2001 prepared by Wyrosdick as an overview of a proposed sidewalk along Evergreen Road. It provides background material on the road and careful consideration of concerns raised by residents at the public discussion. The planners report offers alternative recommendations for consideration. This document will be included in the Planning Board's report to add to the understanding of what the board has considered in its study. The material from DeCorte, Spallasso, and Woodard will also be part of the report to Council. Planning Board meeting minutes will be included as background information on the board's discussion.

Wyrosdick distributed a copy of the cover page for the Evergreen Road Sidewalk Study, which indicates who the report was prepared for and who is involved. An "Introduction and Background" sheet describes what the Planning Board has done and why. The supporting documentation will follow this sheet. Wyrosdick thinks that the next logical step would be to provide a conclusion from the Planning Board based on the information gathered

The board reviewed the introduction page and suggested removing the "Other Considerations" paragraph.

Jensen summarized that the Planning Board has been studying the rationale for either leaving the Evergreen Road portion out of the Pathways Plan or recommending that it be part of the plan. The board has heard input from area residents, considered information from a traffic safety engineer, reviewed traffic counts and accident reports, and received a report from the Village planning consultant. The Planning Board will make a recommendation based on various input including reports from experts on whether there should be a pathway on Evergreen Road without proposing how to construct it.

Jensen anticipated receiving all the requested information tonight and agreeing on the format for a report to Council. The Planning Board will review the completed report at its next meeting and consider forwarding the material to Council.

Wyrosdick stated that the Pathways Plan recommended a sidewalk on Evergreen Road from Beverly to Riverside, but not all the way to 14 Mile Road. The report she presented to the Planning

Board on sidewalk alternatives encompassed a pathway that extends to 14 Mile Road because she used the 1997 engineering plan as a basis for comparison. Jensen asserted that the Planning Board was not asked to study the section of Evergreen Road from Riverside to 14 Mile Road. Board members agreed to leave that section out of the report although the Planning Board probably agrees that the Village should look at that section in the future.

The Planning Board discussed a consensus recommendation to Council. Woodrow expressed reservations about the feasibility of constructing a sidewalk on the west side of Evergreen between Beverly and Riverside the way it has been designed and presented in the 1997 report. There followed discussion relative to Woodrow's concerns about the disruption that sidewalk construction would cause to the existing terrain and the burden to residents abutting this roadway.

It was clarified that the discussion should be limited to whether a pathway on Evergreen Road should be part of the Village Pathways Plan. The Planning Board was asked to study this and look at alternatives without focusing on construction.

Jensen stated that he was convinced that there should be a pathway on Evergreen Road during the preparation of the Pathways Plan. He became more convinced that it could be done with sensitivity to the environment after reviewing the 1997 engineering plan.

Bliven remarked that the board looked at an alternative consisting of going through the subdivision to the east. He does not think that option addresses the danger of pedestrians trying to walk on Evergreen Road. He thinks that people who want to walk or bicycle along Evergreen and not through the subdivisions should be able to do so without having to walk or ride a bicycle on the roadway.

Downey commented that residents who attended the public discussion talked about the features of the natural beauty road; he would like it to be a natural beauty walk as well.

Woodrow stated that he thinks a pathway should be put along Evergreen Road. He is not technically opposed to a walkway and believes that it is necessary if people walk in that area. He does not like the designs of any of the alternatives he has seen.

Jensen suggested that the construction of the pathway should be decided by a technical committee that works through all of the issues.

Jensen concluded that there is agreement of the board members present that the original recommendation for a pathway on Evergreen between Beverly Road and Riverside Drive is reasonable. The board will review a draft report at its next meeting.

ROMA LOT SPLIT – WOODROW

Woodrow informed the board that he was contacted by Anthony Roma after the last Planning Board meeting regarding the lot split proposal on Beverly Road. Woodrow relayed the specifics of his conversations with Roma and said that he referred Roma to another attorney. Woodrow distributed a copy of a fax dated November 27 that he received from attorney Bob Davis.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

Bliven commented that he disagrees with appointing a Council member to the Pathways Advisory Committee on the basis that the stature of a council member would taint that body. He said that past advisory committees have been comprised of citizens.

PLANNING CONSULTANT’S COMMENTS

There were no comments from the consultant.

BUILDING OFFICIAL COMMENTS

Byrwa advised the board of a lot split request at 32369 Valley Ridge that will be coming before the Planning Board and Council. He displayed a site plan and described the proposal to the board. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on this lot split application at its December 12 meeting. Property owners within 500 feet of the land in question will be notified by mail, and notice of the public hearing will be advertised in the local newspaper.

Smith commended Byrwa for bringing this lot split to the board’s attention in a timely fashion. Bodies in other communities are not doing as well with respect to conforming to new State Law regarding review of lot splits.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pfeifer commented that both the library advisory committee and the 14 Mile Road advisory committee included representatives from Council. She expressed the view that communication between various boards and Council is important, and that Council representation on the Pathways Advisory Committee is important for that reason.

MOTION by Tillman, seconded by Smith, to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 p.m.
Motion passes unanimously.

Carry over items:

- 1 - Entranceway signs (10-27-99)
- 2 - Fourteen Mile Road Corridor Study (10-11-00). Referred to Council (10-24-01).
- 3 - Opinion from legal counsel on current ordinance definition of family (01-24-01).
- 4 - Receive further information on tabled lot split request for 19745 Beverly Road (10-10-01).
- 5- Review alternatives for Evergreen Road pathway (10-24-01).

**David Jensen, Chairperson
Planning Board**

**Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk**