

**City of Kalamazoo  
TRAFFIC BOARD  
Minutes  
July 9, 2015**

Traffic Board Members Present: Jim Hoekstra, Traffic Engineer  
Rebekah Kik, City Planner  
Matt Johnson, City Engineer  
Sue Foune, Public Services Director  
Vernon Coakley, Executive Lieutenant, Public Safety

Other City Staff: Jim Williams, Fire Marshall  
Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Hoekstra called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Hoekstra completed roll call and determined that the aforementioned members were present.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

There were no changes to the July 9, 2015 Traffic Board Agenda.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (June 11, 2015)**

There were no changes to the June 11, 2015 Traffic Board Minutes.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Portage Road No Parking (Pitcher to Reed)**

- This is a request to restripe Portage Rd. from Pitcher to Reed to three lanes and add bike lanes.
- As indicated by City administration, on-street parking would be removed on Portage from Walnut to Reed. A traffic control order would be issued for this change.
- Tammy Taylor, Director of the Edison Neighborhood Association, inquired as to why notices were not sent regarding this agenda item as they have been in the past. She was not aware that there would be no parking in the aforementioned area.
- Paul Selden, Director of Road Safety for the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, commented that the number of people using bikes has increased; adding bike lanes would increase safety for motorists and people on bikes.
- David Jones, League of Michigan Bicyclists, stated that he rarely sees cars parking on that road. He thought that the businesses in that area have parking lots/off-street parking.

- Mr. Selden stated that he met with Marilyn Schlack (KVCC) recently and she is in support of non-motorized transportation opportunities. Although this effort is labeled as no-parking, it will contribute to a larger effort to revitalize the downtown area.
- Chuck Vlieg with LISC (Local Initiative Support Corp.), commented that people are trying to create a vibrant business district in the Portage Street/Washington Square area. He was lead to believe there would be on-street parking and now, with short notice, it appears there will be no on-street parking in that area. He is not opposed to requests to accommodate non-motorized traffic but the neighborhood needs to be retail friendly and on-street parking comes into play. Maybe the street doesn't need to be 4-lanes in that location, but having no parking from Reed to Pitcher would be challenging.
- Ms. Kik advised that there was a three-day charrette in the Edison Neighborhood. Community members were present during the discussions about lane restriping, putting in a street section along Portage Street, preserving parking in certain areas and locations for bike lanes in relation to the farmers market. Property owners can consider putting in off-street parking and there are options for on-street parking. This is an opportunity to do restriping. The full road reconstruction is not scheduled until 2019; changes can be incorporated at that point.
- Mr. Johnson suggested postponing a decision on this agenda item to allow for more research to be done. He advised that this issue just went to the City Commission on Monday for approval. City staff is not looking to start the project anytime soon.
- Mr. Hoekstra stated that there will need to be a Traffic Control Order to make it legally enforceable. That will need to be done before the striping is done.
- Ms. Kik stated that she has reserved a room at the Washington Library for August 4<sup>th</sup> for a public meeting and that perhaps public input could be collected at that time.
- **Mr. Hoekstra suggested seeking public comment on the plan at the August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Washington Library.**
- Mr. Johnson suggested putting the sketch on the Imagine Kalamazoo website also; Ms. Kik concurred.

**b. 1201 Hays Park Concerns**

- Leotha Rogers, owner of 1201 Hays Park, was present to discuss her application. She stated that on Feb. 13, 2013, a car hit her house and broke the gas meter. Gas fumes filled the house. The car was on the lawn against the tree. She hasn't been able to locate the pictures she took of that accident. The foundation of the house was damaged and the insurance company refused to pay for it. She had to pay \$2,000 to make the repairs.
- On October 1, 2014 another car hit her house and tore the fence down. She presented photos showing the damage. The car also hit a tree in her yard and damaged it. She received a letter from the City of Kalamazoo, which stated that she was responsible for making the repairs.
- Annie Sprague, Americorps member with Community Home Works, was present on behalf of Ms. Rogers. Ms. Rogers approached Community Home Works to assist with repairs to her house. Ms. Rogers had to pay out-of-pocket to repair the siding that was

damaged due to cars hitting the house. Some of the repairs can be made at this time but there have been issues with the insurance coverage.

- Officer Coakley inquired if Ms. Rogers is going after the at-fault drivers. Ms. Rogers advised that State Farm Insurance Company provided information for the 2013 accident.
- Ms. Sprague advised that the police report from the first accident appears to be passing the buck onto various people and there was no accountability. The 2013 accident report shows that the son borrowed the car from his mother and then he must have crashed it. The 2014 report refers to a rented car which was loaned to someone named "little man." Ms. Sprague inquired if the car rental company would be held accountable. She also inquired if a guardrail, a stop sign or speed bump could be added to protect the property.
- Officer Coakley stated that this is a civil matter. The car rental company would not be at fault. The person who rented the car or their insurance company would be responsible for the damages. The car rental company should provide information regarding who rented the vehicle.
- Officer Coakley stated that Ms. Rogers can sue for damages to her home. If details in the police report are not accurate, a supervisor can arrange mediation with Ms. Rogers and the officer who took the report to make sure the report is corrected.
- Ms. Sprague inquired about the possibility of putting up guardrails or other improvements. Mr. Hoekstra advised that the City can't place an obstruction, such as a boulder, in the right-of-way because it could cause a crash hazard. Citizens can put boulders on their personal property. There are strict rules about where guardrails can be placed; they would typically be placed by a steep drop-off, not to protect property.
- Mr. Hoekstra referred to the MMUTCD, which indicates that a stop sign would need to meet warrants before being installed (at least four accidents in a twelve month period). In this case, there were four accidents in fourteen years. Ms. Rogers inquired as to where the regulations are. Mr. Hoekstra advised that the regulations can be found in the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD) Section 2b.07
- Ms. Rogers inquired if it would be possible to install "slow down" signs. Mr. Hoekstra advised that the City does not install "slow down" or "children at play" signs.
- Ms. Rogers stated that there is a stop sign on Hays Park but not on James St. It might be helpful to have a yield sign installed on James St. if a stop sign would not be allowed in that location. Mr. Hoekstra advised that it would not be possible to have stop signs and yield signs at the same intersection.
- **Mr. Hoekstra suggested postponing this agenda item to allow time for staff to gather information. There were no objections from the Board.**

### **c. Parker and Old Colony**

- Mr. Hoekstra stated that the City of Kalamazoo has been replacing some signs with new reflective signs, per federal requirements, so they can be seen better at night.
- As the signs were being replaced, staff came across an area at Parker and Old Colony, which shows a Traffic Control Order on record from 1997 requiring a two-way stop rather than a four-way stop. Staff took down the four-way stop, leaving it as two-way stop.

- The neighborhood has asked City staff to investigate this issue. Staff met with some of the neighbors on-site and looked into the traffic volume at that intersection.
- The crash history has been minimal at this intersection so there is no reason to re-install the four-way stop at this time.
- Bill Hughes, 3915 Old Colony, President of Parker-Duke Neighborhood Association, advised that intersection has been a four-way stop since the 1990's. It was his opinion that the four-way stop helps calm traffic. People use that intersection as a cut-through between Westnedge and Bronson.
- Mary Christian, 3903 Old Colony, called Public Safety last year to observe people blowing through stop signs on Parker. She saw it happen twice recently. Vehicles slow down a little anticipating traffic on Old Colony will stop but the stop sign on Old Colony was removed. She doesn't have the data from last year but people were being pulled over. She requested that the City re-evaluate this issue.
- Bill Sorensen, 3633 Old Colony, stated that people are used to Old Colony being a stop so they cross in front of Old Colony traffic. There are no sidewalks on Old Colony. Pedestrian traffic is forced to use the road; that was not a problem in the past. Mr. Sorenson requested that the stop signs be reinstalled.
- Officer Coakley stated that he could set up a traffic stop sting. This can be done periodically throughout the year.
- Sean McCann, 4041 E. Hillandale, commented that this might not be a good use of Public Safety resources or tax payer dollars. He further commented that the sign is stored somewhere. He requested that it be put back the way it was.
- Mr. Hoekstra stated that the manual provides standards which state that a four-way stop should not be used for speed control. Mr. Hughes inquired as to why it would not be used for speed control since it slows down traffic. Mr. Hoekstra disagreed and stated that there have been many nationwide studies to the contrary.
- Mr. Johnson inquired as to who installed the stop sign and why. Ms. Founé inquired if it is grandfathered in. Mr. Hoekstra stated that the stop sign was there illegally, so it is not grandfathered-in.
- Ms. Founé stated that she was in favor of grandfathering in the stop sign; Mr. Johnson agreed. Mr. Hoekstra disagreed and emphasized the need to follow the manual.
- **Officer Coakley, Ms. Founé, Ms. Kik and Mr. Johnson voted in favor of having the stop signs reinstalled. Mr. Hoekstra voted against having the stop signs reinstalled.**

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Lovell St. Parking (Stadium Drive to Eldred)**

- Mr. Hoekstra advised that this matter has been on the agenda since January. The applicants attended the June Traffic Board meeting.
- Mr. Hoekstra noted that the applicants would not be gaining any parking spots with their proposal. It would not be possible to extend the parking toward Stadium. The applicants indicated that they think it would be easier to navigate and park if their request is granted.

- Public safety has concerns about the width of the parking area. Officer Williams commented on the difficulty of removing snow if the lane is narrower.
- Mr. Hoekstra noted that there is no overnight parking from 2 to 6 a.m. in this area. The request is for back-in, reverse angle parking. Representatives from Kalamazoo College had stated that the college would be responsible for plowing the area.
- **Mr. Johnson stated that he saw no advantage to granting the request; Mr. Hoekstra and Officer Coakley concurred. Ms. Kik and Ms. Foune had already left the meeting.**

**7. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS OR CONCERNS**

None

**8. NEXT MEETING**


The next Traffic Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 13, 2015. Agenda items are due to Jim Hoekstra by August 6<sup>th</sup>.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm

Submitted by:   
Recording Secretary

Date: 9-9-15

Approved by:   
Traffic Engineer

Date: 9/9/15