

Village of Elm Grove

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 18, 2023 at 6:30PM – Park View Room

Present: Chair Trustee Kristina Sayas, Trustee Shawn Hillman, Trustee Tom Castile, Committee Members, Ms. Barbara Decker, Mr. John Oliveri, Mr. Michael Danielson

Absent: Ms. Margaret Thew

Also Present: Assistant Chief of Police Ryan Unger and Village Manager Tom Harrigan

1. Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m., by Trustee Sayas.

2. Review and approve minutes from January 11, 2023.

Trustee Sayas entertained a motion to approve the January 11, 2023 minutes. The motion to approve was made by Mr. Danielson and seconded by Mr. Oliveri. The motion to approve the minutes carried unanimously.

Trustee Sayas recognized members of the public that wished to speak that evening:

Mackenzie Johnson 13140 Gremoor Drive

Ms. Johnson expressed her concerns over pedestrian safety around Tonawanda related to the number of vehicles and general traffic in the area specific to drop off and pick up. Ms. Johnson cited there is no shoulder in the area and no pathways leading to surrounding neighborhoods. Ms. Johnson encouraged the committee to look for safe pathways around the school and for more immediate solutions. She also recommended stop signs be installed near the intersection of Gremoor Drive and Arrowhead Ct to help slow cars down and possibly even adding the digital speed tracking signs. Trustee Hillman thanked Ms. Johnson for her comments and recognized the need for better access to the area around Tonawanda. Ms. Johnson also asked if anything can be done regarding timing of landscape companies in the area during peak pick up and drop off times because she indicated they add to the congestion.

Danielle Linn 1285 Fairhaven Blvd

Ms. Linn echoed Ms. Johnson's sentiment and indicated it is a challenge not having safe pathways or walkways around Tonawanda. She indicated that with the watermain project and construction related to the development of the SSND property, there will be more people driving through the community. She was seeking acknowledgment of the problem. Ms. Linn also indicated that there are lots of potholes and just poorly kept shoulder areas around Tonawanda making walking and bicycling unsafe/not easy.

Closed public comment section

3. Review and discuss traffic counter data and speed concerns related to Westover Rd.

Trustee Sayas referred to Assistant Chief (AC) Unger for the data, AC Unger advised that data was collected on Westover Rd from August 2 – August 8 using the department's data recorder. During that time, 6664 vehicles traveled on Westover Rd which is about 3x the normal amount. This increase in volume is due to the Gebhardt Rd construction. AC Unger advised the average speed of the vehicles was 27mph. 234 vehicles (or approximately 3.5% of all vehicles) traveled in excess of 10mph over the 25mph limit. AC Unger advised that during the time of the Gebhardt Road construction (June 21, 2023-September 12, 2023), The police department logged over 47 hours of radar enforcement time on Westover Rd. The department made 8 traffic stops and issued one citation. AC Unger also advised that recently there were claims made that school busses and parents have been speeding through the area primarily during morning drop off and afternoon pick up times. AC Unger advised that School Resource Officer (SRO) Weber has already reached out the bussing company requesting they notify their drivers of the speeding complaints. The bus company advised they will place an "all call" to remind bus drivers to drive safely and follow the speed limits on Village roadways. AC Unger also advised that SRO Weber also intends on having the school post a notice in the school's Friday flyer to be more cognizant of the 25mph limits in the neighborhood surrounding the school.

4. Review and discuss traffic sign data and speed concerns related to Sunnyslope Rd.

AC Unger advised that data was pulled directly off the digital speed sign posted on Sunnyslope Rd and Stonefield Ct. AC Unger advised that during this time, 19009 vehicles traveled n/b on Sunnyslope Rd which averages about 1600/day. AC Unger advised that the average speed of these vehicles was 26.38mph. AC Unger advised that approximately 85% of all vehicles traveled below 30mph on the roadway. AC Unger advised 2339 vehicles or about (12.3%) of vehicles traveled between 6mph-10mph over the posted limit, 513 vehicles, about 2.6% traveled 11mph or faster over the limit, and 62 vehicles, about 0.33%, traveled in excess of 10 over the limit. From September 1, 2023 – September 12, 2023 the police department logged 6.5 hours of radar enforcement time on Sunnyslope Rd. During this time the department made 13 traffic stops and issued 11 citations. Trustee Hillman

asked AC Unger if there was information on where these cited violators resided. AC Unger did not have that information to provide an accurate answer.

At this time, Mr. Broerman, who resides on Stonefield Ct, requested to speak. Trustee Sayas advised Mr. Broerman that the public comment section of the meeting was closed.

Trustee Hillman asked at what speeds the department will stop speeding vehicles. AC Unger advised that each officer has their own speed tolerances and there is no number set in stone. AC Unger also advised that no direction has been made by police administration to not stop or cite vehicles unless they were traveling 13-15mph over the limit. AC Unger advised that the speed limit is 25mph and any speed in excess of that were violating the law and could be pulled over and/or cited.

Trustee Castile expressed desire on exploring options how the committee and police department can be more proactive, continue to study speeding in the village through use of the data recorder, and different possibilities to solve the speeding problem.

5. Review safety concerns related to water main project and detour route

AC Unger advised that the detour route has been set and the route itself should not be a topic of discussion. AC Unger advised that in preparation of the watermain project, the police department has had the digital speed signs temporarily relocated to be within the detour route. He also advised that the police department has deployed the newly purchased speed trailer with solar technology on Elmhurst Parkway and Notre Dame Blvd. He advised that the trailer will eventually be moved to a location closer to Elmhurst Pkwy and 124th St to alert vehicle traveling the detour route earlier. AC Unger advised that the solar technology will allow the speed trailer to be deployed throughout the duration of the project with minimal interruptions. AC Unger also pointed out the 3-way stop sign at the intersection of Elmhurst Pkwy and Legion Dr.

Trustee Sayas pointed out a large tree located at the corner of Longwood Ave and Elmhurst Pkwy, on the southwest corner that could obstruct traffic and be a potential problem. Village Manager indicated the GIS mapping of the tree indicated it was privately owned.

Trustee Hillman asked if there was a plan for trick or treat with respect to the increased pedestrian traffic due to trick or treat. AC Unger advised that the police department plans on making several public notifications regarding vehicle and pedestrian safety around the detour route as the project nears.

Trustee Hillman asked how we would like to streamline complaints associated with the detour route, traffic, and safety as they come into the committee members. AC Unger advised it would be beneficial to have complaints directly made to committee members be

reported to the department by one person. It was decided that complaints received directly to members of the committee will be forwarded to Trustee Sayas who will in turn report them to the police department.

6. Review and discuss concern of coyote presence and nuisance behavior in the Village

Trustee Sayas shared that Russell Gonnering, 1780 San Fernando Drive, emailed President Koleski with concerns about the increasing presence of coyotes. He doesn't want to kill the coyotes but possibly trap and relocate. Because of this email, Trustee Sayas thought the committee should have a discussion and possibly publish the coyote pdf that the committee put together in the Spring of 2022 with winter approaching and less significant food sources available for coyotes. AC Unger then shared information and updated the committee on the coyote activity log from the department. Trustee Sayas also shared with the committee about a recent dog that was attacked by a coyote in the early morning hours of Friday, September 15, and deferred to Mr. Danielson since they are neighbors with the victim dog's owner. Mr. Danielson advised that the dog's veterinarian indicated evidence in the dog's injuries made it obvious to them that the dog was attacked by a coyote and the dog is expected to recover from its injuries. Mr. Danielson advised that the dog owner wanted to make the committee aware of the attack and was not trying to eradicate all coyotes in the neighborhood. Committee members agreed that trapping and relocating coyotes wouldn't solve the problem as other coyotes would just move in and take over the territory. The committee indicated it plans to redistribute the materials previously published regarding coyotes across social media and the Elm Grove News-Independent.

7. Other Business.

Trustee Sayas advised of an email she received from Stacy Barry Coffey on Thursday, September 14, regarding painted crosswalks around Tonawanda and asked if Assistant Chief Unger wished to voice an opinion on the topic. AC Unger advised he would reserve comment at this time until it becomes an agenda item. Trustee Sayas also discussed possibly purchasing and installing orange traffic safety posts along the walkway on the south side of Underwood Parkway to help keep cars clear of the walkway.

Trustee Sayas received an email from Cindy Mason on Thursday, September 14, who resides in Indian Hills. Ms. Mason witnessed kids riding motorized scooters recklessly without helmets and wasn't sure if there's something the committee could do about it. She felt better just voicing her concern. Mr. Oliveri expressed a need for parents to educate their youth regarding scooter safety and teaching street safety and common sense when using electric scooters. AC Unger advised the department can post some scooter safety tips on the police department's social media and the committee advise they can publish something too in the upcoming monthly village newsletter and Elm Grove News-Independent.

Trustee Sayas asked if the department still did the helmet safety ice cream coupons during the summer months. AC Unger advised that we did not conduct the incentive program this year. Trustee Sayas advised she will seek donations from the Citizen's Police Academy Alumni for funding for this program next year.

8. Adjournment

Trustee Sayas entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50pm. Mr Oliveri motioned to adjourn and Trustee Hillman seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan A. Unger
Assistant Chief of Police