

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE
June 13, 2022
7:00pm

Meeting recorded and broadcast live

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Wingfield calls the meeting to order at 7:00pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Wingfield, Councilmembers: Foster, McCarthy, Fleck

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Kellen

Mayor Wingfield opened the meeting by introducing the current situation with the road closure that may need to be amended. She stated that we could do nothing, go back to the old situation, or talk about a hybrid situation where we leave the eastbound lane open and not allow westbound traffic coming from the highway. She opened the floor for resident input and indicated that each person should state their name and address before proceeding.

PUBLIC FORUM

- A. Ron Malles 420 Wildwood asked for clarification on the diagram that was included in the packet. Mary Wingfield explained that from Jay to Mahtomedi, the eastbound lane would be open. A barricade would be at the city border with a one-way, speed bumps, and signage. Ron indicated he does not support a one way. He requested to leave it as is and open it up for residents. Leave eastbound open and the rest leave it as it is.
- B. Mike Wernet. Concerns of lots of large trucks traffic and trailers including delivery trucks passing through Birchwood. People have moved the barricades and drive on the shoulder. He is not supportive of the one way.
- C. Mary Kurtz. She enjoys going to Saint Jude's and the library in Mahtomedi and does not appreciate getting blocked out of her path. She has concerns for the community overall.
- D. Gina Loosebruck. She agrees with Ron and is concerned with community issues. Driving around like that with the price of gas is not acceptable. She says remove barricades or keep half of it closed. Keep the 18 wheelers off and keep the road open.
- E. Jesse Granec. Agrees with Gina. Safety issues and keeping out traffic. Mentions forcing compliance versus changing behavior. Put up speed signs. Open or open partway.

- F. Barter Winter. Absolute block has worked fine and there is less traffic now.
- G. Lynn Hanson. Agrees with the Wernets. Barricades are like a revolving door. The main jam is already over. The closure is open more than it's not. Traffic is less now without school going on. Does not support the one-way at hall. Local residents are affected the most. Recommends no closure.
- H. Sarah Nephew. We should work together with all the communities and be inclusive. The decisions made around this road look ugly.
- I. Jeff Boldt. He is a 13-year resident. Speeding has gotten worse year after year. Wants more speed bumps. Concerns about pedestrian crosswalks.
- J. Shelli Heinsch. Concerned about first responders. Do they go the wrong way when the one-way might be set up?
- K. Tom Patsy. Birchwood became the detour. If we open we become the detour. Option to leave it as is.
- L. Adam Seevers. Questions about Google Maps. We should have them mark the road as closed. Not to point people this way. Council indicated that they requested changes on Google Maps that did not happen.
- M. Trisha Lydon. Her friends and family have gotten cut off. She is not proud to live here anymore. People drive too fast regardless.
- N. Barb Winters. She is a longtime resident. Do not close the roads. Do speed bumps and reduce speeds. She does volunteer work at Mahtomedi. Suggested using radar.
- O. James Nelson. Leave it as it is. Do not make it one-way.
- P. Tori Wormwood. Culture of speeding around here. This is not new. Add speed bumps and lower the speed. She pledges to make sure her kids are safe on crosswalks.
- Q. Sharon Muellerleile. This is affecting other communities. Our road is not under construction.
- R. Jason Leopold. He suggested car counters. The number of cars is down now. He has teen drivers and does not like them taking the highway.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councilmember John Fleck is confident that the decision was correct. Safety, volumes. Open but not entirely as wanted.

Councilmember Mark Foster. As Ron stated, the number of vehicles at the onset was intense. Closure has lessened the traffic. It worked. Being neighborly is a two-way street.

Councilmember Justin McCarthy. Voted differently than the council originally but understood the decision. 244 traffic is about 12,000 cars per day. Birchwood became the de facto detour. Speed bumps - about \$15,000. Consider behavior and volume as a safety issue

Mayor Mary Wingfield. No information from the county that this was going to happen. Dangerous traffic issues. Looking for a compromise. Let's keep talking and keep pivoting. The police opened the barricades last week. We have three options. One is to walk away and leave everything as it is. Another option is to have Shifsky do the barrier which is going to cost us money. The third option is to open the road completely.

Councilmember Mark Foster. If we continuously modify, we lose credibility. Mark sees only two options one is keeping it as it is and the other is opening it up. He is not supportive of a one-way.

Councilmember John Fleck. 70 years of speed volume issues with cars in Birchwood. He like the idea of doing some car counting. The west end of the community is quiet. We are missing an opportunity to reduce the cut-through traffic from the West not with Birchwood as a destination. 700 feet of one-way would be good.

Mayor Mary Wingfield. Read Justin's proposal from the previous meeting. Justin did not get a second on that. Currently what we have in place is not working so we need to change it and we have no law enforcement support.

MOTION (McCarthy) /S (Wingfield) re-open Hall Avenue at Jay Street subject to the following: Local traffic only signs; Speed humps on Wildwood and Hall/Cedar (all the County can provide); Stop signs on every intersection and every direction on Hall/Cedar and Wildwood; Get the speed limit display truck from the county; 20 mph throughout Birchwood.

- Counsel discusses the motion. Discussion is around the fact that enforcement has been an issue. Council member Foster has an issue with speed bumps. Councilmember Fleck agrees. Councilmember McCarthy indicates that the detour only adds 1 to 4 minutes to someone's routes. Mayor Wingfield indicates that the engineer says that stop signs do not work. Councilmember Fleck supports the one-way east of Jay on Hall and would like traffic counting. Discussion around Washington counties involvement. Mayor Wingfield says that opening the road could be dangerous.

Aye, McCarthy, Nay: Fleck, Foster, Wingfield. MOTION FAILED.

- Discussed concerns, Councilmember McCarthy, around flooding. Councilmember Fleck says to use time to do a read on traffic. Councilmember Foster has concerns about isolating seven residents with a one-way. Consideration about the buses in the fall. Speed limit and speed bumps further discussion on their temporary use. The cost would be about \$14,000 and the county has agreed to pay for \$10,000 of that and said to send them the balance and they may pay or may not.

MOTION (Fleck) /S (Wingfield): Make it a one way from Jay Street to the Mahtomedi/Birchwood border, the eastbound lane will be opened to one-way traffic and the westbound lane will remain closed to limit traffic entering from the highway.

Aye, McCarthy, Fleck, Wingfield, Nay: Foster
MOTION PASSED: 3-1

MOTION (Fleck) /S (McCarthy): Have Schifsky set up the one way after driveway at 701 Hall.

Aye, McCarthy, Fleck, Wingfield, Nay: Foster
MOTION PASSED: 3-1

Mayor Wingfield -suggested holding off on the speed bumps for now.

**MOTION MADE COUNCILMEMBER MCCARTHY AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER FLECK TO
ADJOURN**

Aye, McCarthy, Fleck, Foster, Wingfield
MOTION PASSED:4-0

MEETING ADJOURNED

ATTEST



MAYOR WINGFIELD

7/12/2022
Date



CITY ADMINISTRATOR REBECCA KELLEN

7/12/2022
Date