

City of Birchwood Village

Traffic Calming Task Force

Monday August 31, 2020

7:00 p.m.

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**Members in Attendance:** Cora Hankins, Sheri Stronach, Justin McCarthy, Carl Bayley, Counsel liaison Randy LaFoy

**Non-members in Attendance:** None.

Agenda: Agenda for tonight's meeting was reviewed. Sheri Stronach motioned to approve, Carl Bayley seconded, and the task force unanimously approved.

**A. Review and approve August 17 minutes**

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Minutes from last meeting Aug 17, 2020 discussed. No changes needed. Sheri Stronach made motion to approve minutes. Carl Bayley Seconded. Task force unanimously approved.

**B. Review Washington County Engineer Report**

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Engineer's comments indicated signage does not work and the Engineer was in favor of physical barriers. The Engineer was of the opinion that the cars parked on both sides of the road actually make cars slow down and maybe a positive.

A discussion ensued, raised by Sheri Stronach, about the purpose of the committee – whether it was to slow down cars or focus on safety?

Randy LaFoy suggested both a physical bump in the road to slow down traffic with education of the kids.

Sheri Stronach asked about the Engineer's comment that "speed is good, but interesting to look at 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of traffic speeds." Cora Hankins replied that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of traffic speeds is 20 mph or less.

Carl Bayley felt that the speed of traffic is not the issue – but combination of traffic + children. Asked Randy LaFoy if he talked with the engineer about speed only or also discussed safety. Engineer alluded to the speed being good, but that we needed to educate the kids.

Cora Hankins felt that the traffic speed is ok looking at the speed boxes, but suggested that measures be implemented to make sure drivers are attentive to watch for pedestrians.

Sheri Stronach questioned the sound impacts associated with the bump that could annoy neighbors. Randy LaFoy indicated that bigger bumps would make more sound.

It was discussed that cars parked on both sides of the road do decrease speed, but a question remains as to whether they were safe. The example of emergency services getting through was discussed. The members discussed options for having parking only on one side of the street, staggered, or other options.

Carl Bayley felt that emergency services are restricted by too much parking. Traffic is slow, but not predictable. There should be some predictability to train drivers on where to look for children. Randy Lafoy suggested that perhaps it was a few offenders that cause the parking log jam – Sheri Stronach suggested education for those residents.

### **C. Interpret Speed Monitor Results**

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Cora Hankins stated that she has called both Lombardi and Marquardt at the Sherriff's office and have gotten no response.

Randy LaFoy will try and follow up and talk with the Sherriff.

### **D. Research Traffic Calming Measures.**

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Cora Hankins supported the idea of a sign with flashing lights along with a speed bump going eastbound as she felt that that was where some of the speed comes from. She was looking at increasing attentiveness and driver awareness. Carl Bayley was concerned about how we would monitor or record to determine baseline and effectiveness of speed bump/sign.

Justin McCarthy suggested that we do another speed monitor once Birchwood Road/CR 244 is opened to gauge traffic once that is open to determine whether the issue is cut-through traffic. Current speed data shows good results, but those might be residents only who might be more careful than cut-through traffic. Suggested waiting until that data is in to make a decision.

Sheri Stronach was not in favor of a speed bump as she felt this increased the burdens drivers would have to deal with and may further distract drivers. Carl Bayley agrees. Cora Hankins questioned whether they would be in favor of solar signs. Randy LaFoy indicated that the sign will be year round but kids are only playing in summer.

Randy LaFoy suggested more education to kids, rather than change in the road. Sheri Stronach suggested starting with education/communication and the need for more speed box data.

### **E. Bike Safety Education for children/Adults**

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Justin McCarthy – talked with Sgt. Ty Jacobsen of the Washington County Sherriff Department who indicated that they would do a free onsite training, just need date, time, approximate number of kids.

Sheri Stronach suggested we close the road temporarily for the training, Randy LaFoy agreed.

Members agreed that the training should be open to all Birchwood residents.

Members made a recommendation to council to approve a weekend bicycle safety event this year on Wildwood Avenue at the soonest date possible to avoid winter weather for all residents of Birchwood to attend (with appropriate social distancing). Wildwood Ave would be closed during the event.

McCarthy made motion to recommend to council. Sheri seconded. Unanimously Approved. McCarthy to follow up with Sgt Jacobsen about dates/times and availability and will advise members.

Randy LaFoy to follow up with Cora Hankins to encourage Wildwood families to come.

Discussion came back to the parking issue and specifically ways to talk to the families that are the worst offenders. Cora Hankins suggested to draft a letter to families on Wildwood stating that there are concerns about parking. Cora Hankins to draft a letter to people on the road for the next meeting. Carl Bayley felt it would be better to send to all people on Wildwood rather than the offenders.

#### **F. Scope of Council's Request**

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Cora Hankins felt that each area has its own challenges. Wildwood has some specific challenges. Other areas might have different things. Not for widening scope at this point.

Carl Bayley felt that perhaps we expand to all of Birchwood, but have subcommittees for each area.

Sheri Stronach agreed with Cora, like to keep it to Wildwood, but would like to finish up here first, then look at widening it.

Justin McCarthy felt that if we are going to widen the scope of the task force, we would need more comprehensive data to make decisions.

Randy LaFoy urged members to consider what you signed up for – did you sign up for the city-wide scope? Randy felt that we should allow members to continue if they wanted to continue, otherwise, let members leave.

Sheri Stronach recommend that a city-wide task force be initiated and this one continued until we finish it up. Members of this task force could be part of the city-wide task force. Randy LaFoy agreed but suggested a liaison to the larger task force or someone be part of both committees.

#### **G. Q&A**

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Discussion ensued about the CR-244/Birchwood Road intersection and what would happen if we left the road closed barriers – make it harder to go into Mahtomedi. Schools and emergency vehicles may have issues.

Cora Hankins suggested that maybe we consider a Chicane – barrier or some type of barrier to slow traffic there. No restrict of flow, but barriers.

Justin McCarthy felt that exploring options there might be a good idea if there is cut-through traffic as that may be the logical place to address it. But we would need to see the data.

Carl Bayley questioned whether people are cutting through and Randy LaFoy said that there were some traffic counts that supported the notion of a cut-through.

Task force recommended Tobin get additional speed data a few weeks after the Birchwood Road/Cr 244 is reopened. Justin motions, Carl Seconds, unanimous approval.

The task force discussed the next meeting agenda. All agreed to meet before bicycle safety and talk planning. Date/Time agreed on to be Monday the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Cora was hoping to get some Bike MN pamphlets to hand out as she felt that they are good pamphlets on bicycle safety for parents. Supplemental to sheriff training.

Sheri for next meeting, will schedule two meetings to avoid Zoom timer

Cora Hankins made a motion to Adjourn; Sheri Stronach seconded, Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned 8/31.