

**City of Kalamazoo
TRAFFIC BOARD
Minutes
March 11, 2021**

ELECTRONIC MEETING

Traffic Board

Members Present: Christina Anderson, City Planner, CP&D
Anthony Ladd, Assistant Director, Public Works
Dennis Randolph, Traffic Engineer, Public Works
Scott VanderEnde, Executive Lieutenant, KDPS

Members Excused: James Baker, Public Services Director
Scott Borling, City Clerk
Jeff Chamberlain, Deputy City Manager
Matthew Huber, Assistant Chief, KDPS
Teresa Johnson, Deputy Director, Public Services
Jim Ritsema, City Manager

City Staff: Karen Rutherford, Recording Secretary

Guests: Leslie Hoffman, Central City Parking

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ladd called the meeting to order at 2:00p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chairman Ladd conducted roll call and determined the aforementioned members were present, and quorum existed.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no changes to the March 11, 2021 Agenda. Committee Member Anderson supported by Committee Member VanderEnde, made a motion to approve the March 11, 2021 Agenda. With a voice vote, the motion was carried.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (March 12, 2020)

There were no changes to the March 12, 2020 Traffic Board Minutes. Committee Member Anderson supported by Committee Member VanderEnde, made a motion to approve the March 12, 2020 Traffic Board Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion was carried.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Introduction of new Traffic Engineer Dennis Randolph

Chairman Anthony Ladd introduced the new City of Kalamazoo Traffic Engineer, Dennis Randolph.

Traffic Calming Process

Chairman Anthony Ladd introduced the traffic calming process to the committee. He noted in the past year Public Works and Community Planning and Development (CP&D) have been working closely with neighborhood associations, residents, and special interest groups to develop a formal plan to introduce and pilot a traffic calming method in the City. He stated they have put a lot of effort and thought into different calming methods, spending time to understand the needs of the road types, understanding the issues the residents are seeing, and to properly assert traffic calming for the needs they are having. There is not a one size fits all method. Issues include speeding, distracted driving, and dangerous curves along with other numerous complaints. He stated leaning on the engagement with neighborhood associations through CP&D and their conversations, they realize they have an avenue to understand the issues and to make sure the neighborhood supports the solution being implemented. He stated they are bringing this before the board for their input and to receive their formal approval for this process going forward.

Committee Member Anderson stated a copy of the draft of the Traffic Calming Process was included in the packet today. She noted over the past year they have been receiving more and more request about traffic calming from the neighborhoods. Former employee, Katie Reily, Neighborhood Activator, put together this process so they can begin testing the engagement piece, understanding what the issues are, developing solutions, and implementation.

Committee Member Anderson explained there are a couple of avenues to which a neighborhood can enter this process:

- 1) When traffic calming is discussed as an issue, we can bring them through this process to focus on the issues and develop potential solutions.
- 2) If you are a neighborhood that is just starting or partially through the neighborhood planning process, and if there is clear support about traffic calming.
- 3) Additionally, in neighborhoods that do not have plans yet and we start to hear comments, we can figure out a path to work directly to get engagement and consensus to move through this process.

The process calls out a series of meetings. Meeting occur at the beginning to make sure we understand what the issue is. We do a study that includes a speed study, traffic counts, observations, understanding the land use around the area such as parks, schools, etc. The process outlines how we can engage at a door to door level of the impacted streets by knocking on doors

or sending post cards to make people aware of the issues that have been brought up, and how we proceed. Once this happens, we have a process of how we test what the solutions might be. There will not be one solution that will be right for every area. We will work with the neighborhoods to see what solution will best fit that issue. If necessary, we can do low budget tests of several solutions to find out what will work best.

Chairman Ladd added that they intend on doing pre and post implementation of volume counts, traffic study, speed studies, along with other metrics to see how effective those methods are.

Committee Anderson stated the Traffic Board has been listed in the process as the point of contact to discuss potential projects moving forward. We were waiting for the new Traffic Engineer to be present before starting the process. We will be hiring a Transportation Planner soon who will help kick off this project in the neighborhoods of Eastside, Oakwood, and Parkview Hills.

Chairman Ladd noted the Traffic Board will prioritize the projects when multiple requests are made and what solution would be best.

Committee Member Randolph stated he has been gathering several devises that are available to use as solutions and is always looking for additional ideas and devises used in other cities to keep in his "tool box".

Chairman Ladd stated he doesn't want neighborhoods to tell the board what they want but to only introduce their problem and the board would decide on the appropriate solution.

Committee Anderson stated she would like to meet next month and get some plans made so they can start working on this process. Chairman Ladd agreed and stated we do not have to have this process set in stone exactly how they want it, but to start moving forward.

Chairman Ladd stated he would like to compare our list of speeding issues with KPS and the areas they are having issues with. Committee Member VanderEnde stated he could get a list together.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS OR CONCERNS

None

8. Public Comments

- a. Alice Taylor asked if the methods of calming traffic, such as speed bumps, has an effect on the property value in the area.

Chairman Ladd stated in the discussions they have had, and, in the research, they have not seen anything noted which states speed humps have affected property value. He stated he would assume making a street safer would add value. Committee Member Randolph stated he has not seen anything in the literature stating it would cause a negative impact on property values. He added he first started using speed humps in the late 1980's in Fairfax County, Virginia. They put them in neighborhoods, and they did not have any problems. People were happy when they put them in the right place. He noted we need to pick the right device for the right place. They informed people and the people were happy with them. He added that no one has ever asked to have them taken out.

Committee Member Anderson agreed and stated they could make calls to other communities to ask this question. She noted she has not heard of them causing any negative impacts on property values.

Chairman Ladd stated although these methods are new to Kalamazoo, they are not new nation-wide as Committee Member Randolph noted. He added there is a lot of research and studies that have been developed and there is a reason why they are still in use today.

- b. Caller reports his concern with the reductions of the lanes on Portage Rd. from four lanes, two lanes in each direction, to one lane in each direction with a turn lane in the center. He has been a business owner and resident in this area for over thirty years. Since the reduction of lanes, between Stockbridge and Walnut, the collisions have skyrocketed. It is unsafe and the traffic backs up for miles. The bike lanes that were installed are twice as wide on both sides of the road as they are on Oakland. The turn lane is not justified or used. This road is a gateway in and out of the City and is currently unsafe. It is causing traffic jams and pollution with the stopping and going.

Chairman Ladd stated all comments are appreciated. Those comments are directed more to Public Services in general and falls outside Traffic Board and the decisions it makes. As it pertains to road diets and the four to three lane conversions that have been implemented, they have given several presentations of the benefits. There are statistics that show while the number of accidents has not decreased, they have not increased either and they have been less fatal and less serious.

Chairman Ladd stated from an environmental standpoint, stopping, and starting, they are trying to mitigate that as much as they can. Adding a turn lane has reduced the number of stops. Adding a bike lane encourages bicyclist to use dedicated and safe bicycle infrastructure.

As far as the traffic, what they have seen on the existing road diets on Oakland, Cork, Burdick, and Portage, for the amount of traffic volume on Portage, it is more than capable of handling those traffic volumes in a road diet three lane condition.

9. NEXT MEETING

- Date: Thursday, April 8, 2021, electronic meeting
- Agenda items submitted to Karen Rutherford (rutherfordk@kalamazoocity.org) by March 31, 2021.

10. ADJOURN

Committee Member Randolph supported by Committee Member Anderson, made a motion to adjourn the Traffic Board meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

Submitted by: Karen Rutherford Date: 4-8-2021
Recording Secretary

Approved by: ADDP Date: 4/12/21
Staff Liaison

Traffic Calming Process

1. Neighborhood completes neighborhood plan.
 - a. Neighborhood plan should be agreed upon traffic issue areas in neighborhood.
 - b. If a neighborhood plan does not identify traffic calming or traffic concerns, multiple residents from the neighborhood must express similar needs or concerns for a particular area in order to be eligible for traffic calming.

During neighborhood planning

Very short term (3-7 Days) traffic calming test (hay bales, tempura paint, planters) can be done during the neighborhood planning process. If this is done the traffic calming process can begin at step 7 using neighborhood plan engagement. Process would continue as normal from that point.

2. Public Services and Planning staff will present Traffic Board with projects from neighborhood plans in the Winter. At this meeting the available data will be reviewed for each project.
 - i. Calls for service
 - ii. History of Crashes
 - iii. *Local Street list (for timing)*
 - iv. Past Comments/ Calls
 1. All Departments

b. Staff select three projects+/ year.
3. Project locations are studied (Planning and Public Services)
 - i. Studies may include:
 1. Traffic Counts
 2. Speed Study
 3. *Ped. Counts*
 4. *Proximity to attractors or future development plans*
 - b. Staff may identify needed changes (ex. Stop signs) that are done regardless of traffic calming study outcome
 - c. Project area may be refined based on study results.
4. Project announcement postcard mailed to project areas, culs de sac that end on project area streets and those 100' off of project areas
 - a. Meeting/Activity #1 Date
 - b. Project Page to stay up to date
 - c. Area selected
 - d. Why (neighborhood plan points)
 - e. Make sure we have the full picture (short survey)
 - f. Call 311 with questions
5. Public Services creates preliminary designs
 - a. Reviewed by public safety (and KPS and Metro as needed)
6. Meeting/Activity #1
 - a. At the meeting:
 - i. Streets closed/ local only
 - ii. Design is marked on street(s) before the meeting

- iii. Staff will walk the streets with residents to explain design, why certain tool was selected, and discuss (record for IK project page)
 - iv. Survey collected from attendees
 - 1. I am excited
 - 2. I am confused about the project
 - 3. I don't think it will have the impact we need
 - 4. I don't think we need this
 - a. Please explain
 - 5. Contact info
- 7. Public Services refines design as needed
 - a. Planning staff provides summary of survey comments
- 8. Meeting/Activity 2 – Installation event
 - i. Postcard mailed/ Door hanger to project areas, culs de sac that end on project area streets and those 100' off of project areas
 - ii. Social media
 - iii. Project page updated with designs
 - iv. News release
 - b. Street closed/ local Only
 - c. Location in the project area is selected to install example(s)
 - d. Demonstration of how to navigate
 - e. Presentation of how this design changed/ addressed comments from meeting 1
 - f. Timeline for testing/ confirming design

If speed humps/ tables/ raised intersection/ raised crosswalks are one of the tools used residents on those streets will be contacted directly via mail-in survey to discuss and be surveyed for approval

- 1. **At least 60% of owners/ occupants in project area with vertical elements must agree before install because of the permanence of the design element (immediately asphalt)**

- 9. Project areas are studied over 6 months to determine impacts
 - a. Planning staff will pull comments received post install
 - b. Staff meeting (Traffic Board members) to discuss project results
- 10. Meeting/Activity #3 - 6 Month Follow-up meeting - Resident confirmation
 - a. Door hanger survey in project area
 - i. Have you noticed a positive change?
 - ii. Has there been any unexpected changes? (unintended consequences)
 - iii. If 60% approve of changes / have seen positive impact the project remains as is
 - iv. If less than 60% report disapproval, depending on why, the design may be adjusted or removed
- 11. Move toward final installation (concrete)
 - a. Bollards and paint tend to last about 5 years according to studies
 - b. If implementation can be designed with green space/plantings it is encouraged.
 - i. Opportunity for follow-up engagement about final design