

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Safety Committee  
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building  
On Monday February 22, 2016 at 6:30 P.M.**

Committee Members Present:

Councilwoman-at-Large Tammy Holtzmeier; 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Councilman Dan Urban  
Chairman, Ward 3 Councilwoman Mary Berges

Others in Attendance:

Council President Craig Witherspoon; 1<sup>st</sup> Ward Councilman Bob Butkowski; Councilman-at-Large Brian Fischer; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Councilman Dennis McBride; Police Chief Rich Bosley; Police Capt. Larry Fischbach; Fire Chief Frank Root

**Excessive Speed Deterrents in Neighborhoods**

Ms. Berges summarized the issues that were brought forward by residents of Stonebridge Subdivision at the Council Meeting of January 25<sup>th</sup>, which were: 1. The volume of traffic going through some of the streets 2. Excessive speeding through the streets in the neighborhood 3. Non-compliance of stopping at stop signs. She stated that those are the three main points that would be discussed at this meeting.

Ms. Berges asked if a traffic study had been done of the development and the area in question and Police Capt. Larry Fischbach responded that the only traffic study that was done on Kenwyn Blvd. specifically was with a piece of equipment called Stealth Stat, which is a radar based unit that counts vehicular traffic and averages numbers to come up with average speeds. The volume of traffic was 993 cars a day and the average speed was 24.81 mph for north bound traffic and 23.2 mph for south bound.

Ms. Berges then asked about accidents in that development and Capt. Fischbach said that he had gone back to 2004, which is when they started doing the computerized crash reports, and the last reported crash on Kenwyn occurred in 2005. It was a one-car crash in which the operator failed to control her vehicle. Capt. Fischbach added he looked at several streets in the development, going back to 2004/2005 and out of all those streets, there were five crashes that involved failure to control, two that involved improper braking, two that involved people driving left of center, one that involved reckless operation, two improper turns, and one was a car vs. a pedestrian – a child had darted out into the roadway and the child was found to be at fault. There was nothing to show a serious situation on Kenwyn as far as crashes are concerned.

Mr. Urban asked if there was an objective for this evening and then, coming out of this evening, determining what we might want to do as a Committee and as a Council or is this just a fact-gathering, hearing more from the residents for right now and then figuring out what we want to do.

Ms. Berges said she thought the meeting was to understand what it is that we are dealing with. The first step in determining if there are any kind of traffic controls that need to be put in place is to find out if there is a need for those traffic controls and then if there is a need, what those traffic controls would be. It is a fact finding meeting; she thought that is the first step.

Mrs. Holtzmeier asked if the 993 cars a day on Kenwyn was an average number of what you would get as a feeder street in the City and Chief Bosley responded that it depends on the development. The only thing we have as a comparison right now is Bentley Drive. Kenwyn is designed as more of a collector

street and Bentley is designed as a local street. Bentley averages probably twice as many cars a day as Kenwyn does. And it depends on the size of the development. Stonebridge is a very large development so what we do not know is how many of the cars going down that street are residents who live back there and how many are people driving through.

Mrs. Holtzmeier said that in the previous conversation, it was noted that those license plates that were seen were those of Avon residents and it was determined that people were going from one place to another as more of a local commute, so would it be fair to say that those 993 cars are coming through one time and then coming back through on their way back home? So as far as the number of cars, is it fair to cut that 993 cars a day number in half as far as individual vehicles? And is it a fair assumption that the number of residential houses in an area directly impacts the number of cars you might see? So you are finding somewhat local traffic and you are not finding any additional traffic than you might expect for a neighborhood of that size? Chief Bosley said that he would say that the vast majority of traffic is residents of that development.

Doug Isham, a resident who lives on the corner of Kenwyn Blvd. and Heron Lane, stated that he has lived there for 12 years. He primarily works out of his house and observes a lot and generally speaking has observed that there are "rush hours" in the morning and evening when people come back home. People do cut through from other developments and there is a lot of traffic from within Stonebridge as well and we have speeding problems with both. He has a speed gun and has calculated some drivers at 50 -55 mph and has seen them blowing through stop signs. He said that having the Stealth Stat for one week out of 52 does not paint the picture of the problem. He believes that he has a really good feel for what is going on. He has lived there for 12 years, from day one of the development. He thinks the whole design of feeder streets funneling congestion off the main arteries has proved to not be a very good idea for those that live within some of these developments within our community.

Ms. Berges asked if we had another apparatus besides the Stealth Stat, that would actually identify those who are speeding through the neighborhoods, that would take a picture of their license plates and Chief Bosley answered, no. Ms. Berges said, so it would require a police officer to be there with a radar gun. Have we stationed a police officer there to do that? Capt. Fischbach said that there have been officers in there quite a bit, probably more than any other development in the last year or two. Ms. Berges asked what have we found and Capt. Fischbach said the officers have not written a lot of speed citations in there, but there have been stop sign violation warnings and things of that nature.

Mr. Isham said that oftentimes the police officers will park at the end of Kenwyn; it is a dead end. There is not a lot of opportunity for the police to be out of sight, so when you are coming up Kenwyn or Heron there is ample time for somebody who is doing 40, 50 or some excessive speed to look across and see the police, so to him that is not effective.

Brandon Wheeler, Muirwood Drive, stated that he does not pretend to know the answers to the problems. He will say that in the month since the last meeting, he feels that there has been an increased police presence in the neighborhood and he appreciates that. It is a very positive step to have this dialogue and he wanted to say thank you for allowing everybody to come up here and talk about solutions. He would love to be a part of getting the word out to the neighborhood because he agrees that the residents in the neighborhood are a big part of our problem. For him, the issue is the stop signs; he is at a corner so he does not see the excessive speeding but he does see the failure to stop. He is really excited that this meeting was called and the Safety Committee has decided to hear us out and make this a priority. Again, he said that he wants to help and intends to be part of the solution.

Mr. Witherspoon asked if the Stonebridge Homeowners Association has done anything about this problem. One of the residents stated that letters have been sent out by the HOA but they obviously fell on deaf ears. Mr. Isham said that their HOA is builder-led; by Ohio law the homeowners have yet to have control of their own HOA. The builder has control until there is a certain percent of completion of the development. For all the 12 years that he has lived there, the HOA has been a degree of dysfunction and there has been some change in management. There has been a lack of attention to many issues, not just this traffic issue. Hopefully, they will soon be homeowner-managed and can help address this issue a bit more. Mr. Witherspoon asked when that change might take place and a resident responded that, supposedly, there are six more homes to go into the development but they have not even put the street in yet. And Ohio law says that until all the lots are sold, the developer is in control. Mr. Butkowski asked if there were any residents on the Board and Mr. Isham answered that for the first several years, there was zero homeowner representation. They hired an attorney and were able to get two seats for a number of years but ultimately they lost those two seats so for the last five or six years, they have had zero homeowner participation on the Board.

A resident asked the Committee if they had any experience with working with HOAs in other developments to curb some of these issues? Is there some advice they would have to get through on a problem like this; are there things that they would be allowed to do such as posting signs?

Mr. Butkowski said that he can only speak from personal experience with his HOA in Highland Park and noted that the City does not have anything to do with HOAs. He said that this is not an isolated incident of speeding or people blowing stop signs; they have it in his development and in Bentley Park as well. He said that his HOA is proactive; they have an annual meeting that is well-attended. He thinks that, from what it is sounding like, that the Stonebridge residents have to bypass their current HOA and create something that is outside of that. It is almost going to take a groundswell of the local residents. The City cannot have a police officer stationed at every stop sign in the City and that is where the personal groundswell of the residents comes in, putting that onus on your own neighbor.

Mr. Wheeler stated that the increased police presence in the neighborhood is a positive movement. Enforcing the speed limit is important; when someone speeds or runs a stop sign and gets a ticket, that is a deterrent. A couple weeks ago, he noticed a police cruiser parked in the pool parking lot watching the stop sign and 100% of the cars that came up to that stop sign, stopped. And that might have put into those people's minds, that the police are paying attention.

Greg Lodge, Bentley Drive, stated that three years ago, his child was hit by a car on Bentley Drive. They live on a dead end street off from Bentley and police officers do sit there. It is a local street as you called it but you have a school there, the buses, teachers, and families all driving through that street. People have moved off from their street because of the traffic. This is something we need to think of as a community; we need to find some sort of deterrent.

Mayor Jensen stated that at the first meeting we talked about speed humps and some other ways that we could do things. He has done some research and has had Fire Chief Frank Root do some research and he asked Chief Root to address certain problems or concerns that the safety forces would face with the speed humps. This is also a good chance to open up some dialogue on some other possible solutions that we have looked at.

Chief Root stated that the Fire Dept. is dealing with a matter of seconds in either a medical emergency or a fire and he said that the Fire Dept. is pretty much against any kind of speed hump. Recently there

was a fire in a garage which was attached to the house and they were probably within seconds of losing that whole house. If they had been slowed down by speed humps he was sure they would have had a different outcome to that fire. A fire truck just cannot go over speed humps at any kind of speed whatsoever. And a squad going over a speed hump is going to slow down tremendously in responding to an emergency, and with a patient, you would slow down even more.

Mayor Jensen stated that, regarding the Bentley issue, he and Chief Bosley will be going back to the schools again because before school started last fall, we asked them to look at the problems there and they had assured us that they would do some things to make it better through there. Chief Bosley and Capt. Fischbach have noticed that it has not helped at all and we cannot allow it to continue the way it is.

Mayor Jensen stated they have looked at another piece of equipment called a radar sign. We are hoping that a lot of the people who speed through the neighborhoods are just not aware that they are speeding, so that when they see how fast they are going with this radar sign, they will slow down. We may have some test areas for that device. If you read anywhere, you will find that there are communities that are removing the speed humps now. There are communities all over who are complaining about the same issues that we have so we all realize there is a problem. But now how do we correct it? We are in the beginning stages of trying to find out. The Mayor said that he certainly wants the input from our safety forces as we move forward but it is going to take a personal answer to people doing the right thing.

Larry Schram, Kenwyn Blvd., offered some examples of deterrents. He said that in Lakewood, their speed signs give the speed limit of 25 mph and declare a fine of up to \$500. Lakewood also uses a method of moving cars into one lane: small pylons that stand up and if you hit them, they bend over and they jut out and make the cars go into one lane and it slows the speed down. In the report it says that more than 12,000 vehicles travel that street in a week and that 71% of the residents signed the initial petition to have the pylons put in. He said that there are several other methods of slowing traffic such as circle traffic, speed tables, raised intersections, chokers, center isles, closures, and speed bumps. He then asked for clarification of the Stealth Stat report. As he understands it, it is an average of drivers every 15 minutes and then an average of all the averages to make the report. Chief Bosley stated that it actually averages every speed, not the 15 minute intervals, but we do not have access to that data. Mr. Schram pointed out that an average of all the averages would make it lower and Chief Bosley said, but it does show that the 85 percentile is accurate for all cars. Mr. Schram said, so that means 977 cars were over 29.5 mph on your data if you add up the numbers, or 690 cars in the 5 day period going 29.5 mph or greater down Kenwyn. He said that he asked early on about what was happening with North Long Road connecting into Detroit Road. He has been told that it is on the proposed map, so what does he have to do, as a citizen, to get that off the proposed map? What does he have to do to get that street to not come through to his street?

Mr. Gasior responded that that is a planning function; that is how that got on the map. A planner looks at the entire City, and tries to calculate where traffic is going to flow and how to get traffic to flow so if you just walked into Planning Commission and said that you would like to take that off the Master Thoroughfare Plan, you would have a problem. There would have to be some planning expert, some traffic expert, someone who is looking at the bigger picture that would have to come forward and recommend something like that. And it may also have to do with land use in that particular area, so it is a function of zoning, of traffic movement; a lot of things go into that decision to remove or add a street from a thoroughfare plan.

Someone asked, so if the members of the community disagree with it, how would we go about making those steps? Mr. Gasior answered that if you had a number of members of the community to come to a meeting, he imagined that the Planning Commission would probably hire the services of a planner again to review the Master Thoroughfare Plan and that person would make recommendations. A resident asked, in lieu of having people show up at a meeting, if a petition could be signed for something like that and Mr. Gasior said it is just a matter of how much interest there would be for the City to re-study that Master Thoroughfare Plan to determine whether or not that possible connection there is still in the City's best interests to maintain on the map. The same resident stated that he believed that if that if that road would ever go through, they will become the cut through to the Middle School, and that would make it even worse. Mr. Gasior said that we will take a look at that. If there is enough interest and Planning Commission wants to take up the issue, that would be where you would have to start because it is part of the Master Thoroughfare Plan and those are all planning functions.

A resident on Quail Hollow said that we have talked a lot about Kenwyn but he would venture to say that the traffic on Quail Hollow and Heron is a lot heavier than it is on Kenwyn. His street is the cut through and now they are going to have a new condominium complex that will be entering into the equation. He would like to see the Stealth Stat put on Quail Hollow because he would say that the numbers on Quail Hollow are even greater than on Kenwyn.

Ms. Berges asked the Police Dept. to put the Stealth Stat out there a few more times because she understands what everyone is saying that a one week period may not be enough to reflect what is really happening there.

Ms. Berges thanked everyone for coming to this meeting; they have learned a lot about traffic controls which will help them as they consider what options may be available to the City.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Transcribed by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council

