

## HEW Committee 6-11-2013 Minutes

Attending: Natalie Wolf (chair), Tom Muething (committee member), Ed Hattenbach (committee member) Bill Doering (council member); Staff: Scott Lahrmer, Steve Rasfield, Chief Rich Wallace, John Eisenmann , Village Engineer (CDS Assoc.); Residents: Rabbi Yacov Toron, Peg Conway, Allie Weaver, Merrie Stillpass, Jose C. Trevino, Jill Meckleborg, Brad Hoekzema, Arna Fisher, Myrtle H. Welson, Fran Behrman, Bonnie Burte, Mickey Fishman

The meeting was called to order at 3:31. Minutes from the previous meeting of April 2, 2013 were approved.

Chair Natalie Wolf opened the meeting by stating that the purpose was to discuss the entire realm of “pedestrian safety” and not to focus only on sidewalks. Historically, Amberley has discussed the sidewalk issue on several occasions since the 1990s and no action beyond committee has been taken. A petition was circulated and signed by 68 residents desiring a sidewalk study on Section Rd. in 2006. In 2007 a focus group of residents was convened to study sidewalks. Both the CAC for Amberley Green and the Long Range Planning Committee discussed the importance of sidewalks and connectivity. John Eisenmann added that a “Bikeway Study” was done between 1994-1996 that looked at putting a pathway between Ridge & Elbrook on Section Rd. Public hearings were held and there was newspaper publicity with residents opposed being in two camps: those who felt that pedestrian pathways lead to an increase in crime and those who did not want to allow easements on their property. Additionally, cost was a factor in the issue never moving forward. Steve Rasfield also recalls that there was discussion regarding different materials that could be used for the paths and associated costs.

There have been a few incidents where pedestrians were struck by cars in Amberley since the 1970s, resulting in two deaths. Residents in attendance, anecdotally, described either witnessing or experience several “close calls.”

Residents in attendance were fully in support of making Amberley’s roads safer for all pedestrians. Three possible methods were identified: crosswalk installations at the most dangerous intersections, speed humps/bumps on residential streets that are often used as “cut throughs” by motorists and/or long streets where speed is a factor, and pathways (sidewalks).

Residents also stated that Amberley is behind in current trends toward walkable communities by being a community that has made no improvements toward becoming more pedestrian friendly.

Councilman Doering expressed that Amberley does not have money in the budget for sidewalks and wondered if residents would be willing to pay higher taxes for sidewalk implementation.

Other suggestions were 1) more education for both drivers and pedestrians and 2) use of reflective vests for members of the Orthodox community who walk to synagogue after dark. Chief Wallace is looking for grant funding to purchase reflective vests. The annual Ice Cream Social was suggested as a place where a table could be set up to display educational material for walkers.

Regarding crosswalks: John Eisenmann indicated that some intersections could be made safer for pedestrians by installing crosswalks. He suggested that residents identify where they perceive the most dangerous crossings are located. There are several different styles and price options for crosswalks depending on what is needed/required to make the intersection safer.

No specific action was taken by the committee, but residents’ responses at the meeting and on Nextdoor give an indication that this is an issue of great importance to Amberley residents and that council should find a way to prioritize pedestrian safety in stages.