

Advisory Traffic and Safety Board Meeting
March 10, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Colling called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Thomas Blackstone
Frank Cardimen Jr.
Ernest Colling Jr.
Paul Franklin
Carl Moore

Absent:

Scott Hunter (arrives at 7:55 p.m.)
Allan Schneck

Non-voting members present:

Marc Matich, Traffic Technician
Sheryl McIsaac, Recording Secretary
Paul Shumejko, Transportation Engineer
Michael Webber, City Council Representative

Chairperson Colling stated a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES 2009-0088

Chairperson Colling noted that the first item on the agenda was Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting of December 9, 2008. He asked if anyone would like to make a motion to approve or amend them. A motion to approve them as presented was made by Mr. Cardimen, and seconded by Mr. Blackstone.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Absent: Scott Hunter
Allan Schneck

MOTION CARRIED

COMMUNICATIONS

2009-0089

Several communication items were listed on the agenda, and Chairperson Colling read the titles aloud. Mr. Shumejko explained that the first letter was from the Road Commission, and that it was sent to various cities and townships regarding the lifting of the residential speed limits along gravel roads.

The second communication was an email to the Road Commission regarding the timing of the signal at the intersection of Auburn and Livernois. Mr. Shumejko reminded Board members that there was discussion at the previous meeting regarding the cut-through traffic on Bagley Drive because of the timing of the signal. The City asked the Road Commission to give a little more “green time” for eastbound Auburn, and the County has adjusted the timing.

The next communication was regarding the Master Thoroughfare Plan Update and letters sent to various agencies and municipalities outlining the City of Rochester Hills’ priority projects, in order to enlist their cooperation. Mr. Shumejko stated that the Dequindre Road corridor was listed as our number one priority.

Chairperson Colling said since there were a number of residents present for the Cone Street issue, he would like to rearrange the order of the agenda to take that matter next. All Board members agreed. He asked Staff to give the Board members an overview. Mr. Shumejko reminded all of the issues on Cone Street with the school traffic/drop-off and the school gated access at Avondale Middle School.

The first action the City was asked to follow up on was to verify the limitations and restrictions that were originally outlined on the site plans that were submitted for the school. Mr. Matich stated that there were no site plans reviewed by the City for the school’s addition, and that the City did not approve any plans. Mr. Shumejko said that the requirement for the access point from Cone to the school was partially required by the City of Rochester Hills.

Mr. Shumejko related that the second thing the City did was have a meeting with the school to get them up to speed on the discussions that took place at the previous Board meeting. Several items regarding the gated access and its uses for bringing buses in and out of the site were talked about. What the school has done since that time is have the gate open from 7:00 - 9:30 a.m., close it at that point, and then reopen it between 2:00 - 4:30 p.m. The Board also proposed that the school construct a five-foot wide sidewalk at the northern end of Cone to provide a walkway into the school’s property. Also suggested was possibly securing funding dollars to install speed humps along Cone Street, to provide traffic calming measures. Streetlights were also discussed as part of the solution at the intersection. Mr. Shumejko stated that the City invited the school’s superintendent, Mr. George Heithsch, to be present tonight to give an overview of their operations, and how they utilize that access point for the pick-up and drop-off of students, as well as busing.

Chairperson Colling said they would hear public comments on this matter before or after the superintendent spoke. He thought it would be best if the Board allowed the superintendent to give his statement to the Board and the audience first. He stated that he wanted the superintendent to give a brief overview of the intent of the school, and then open the matter up for public comments. After public comment is over he would then open the matter up to the Board. Chairperson Colling asked anyone wishing to speak to please fill out a speaker's card and hand it to the secretary.

Mr. George Heitsch
Superintendent of Avondale Schools

Mr. Heitsch started out by apologizing because he missed the December 2008 Advisory Traffic and Safety board meeting. The meeting conflicted with a vocal music concert at Avondale High School, and in his job you don't miss the holiday vocal music concert. He asked if the Board was interested in how the school used the gate and the purpose behind it.

Chairperson Colling said that the immediate residents on Cone Street were concerned with student drop off and pick up, as it backed up the traffic so they couldn't get out of their driveways. There is also a great concern for the safety of the kids. Chairperson Colling said that the original intent was for the gate to be kept closed except when the school needed to use it. This kind of evolved into opening it up to bus traffic, and pretty soon it was open all the time. Those are the concerns that came before the Board, and tonight the Board is here to hear the school's side of the issue.

Mr. Heitsch stated that there are two changes that have been made in transportation in the past two years that have also added to the traffic. The two school buildings that are on the site are Avondale Middle School and Avondale Meadows. Prior to the 2007-2008 school year they were on separate bus runs. They consolidated some bus runs so now we have all of our bus traffic going to both Meadows and Avondale Middle School at the same time of the day, which increased traffic. The second thing that impacted this is that the school implemented a ½ mile walking distance to school and to bus stops last year, which created more foot traffic in the neighborhood. So the school has used the gate and kept it open for bus traffic to get in. Their bus routes for this school year are currently built from a timing standpoint of getting students in and out of school by having the gate open. The school is committed to building routes in the future that do not use that gate as an access point to the Middle School.

In fairness to the Board and to the community, the school gets conflicting reports on whether the gate should be open or closed. The school hears from people in the neighborhood that it is creating unsafe conditions for students to walk to school, and the school also hears from people in that neighborhood that they want the gate kept open because it is the only way to mitigate traffic. The school also gets conflicting reports from the fire and police departments on what makes the most sense for their use.

For the long-range, Mr. Heitsch would like Rochester Hills to own that boulevard so it is no longer a school issue. Mr. Heitsch stated that it would be different next year and he could guarantee to the Board and the community that the school will not use that gate for transportation when they build routes. If the school were to make that change right now the school wouldn't be able to get kids to and from the high school with the middle school transition.

Chairperson Colling said that the Board realized that there has to be some plan in action because even if they shut the gate they will still have a traffic problem. The Board is here to talk about every side of the issue and figure out what can be done, and what the general public wants.

Mr. Heitsch stated that he was at the meeting to be a good neighbor to the City and to the neighborhood. Some of the issues that the school has had are that when they kept the gate locked on a regular basis, vehicle traffic would go around it and drive through the little gulley and back up. The school tried to fence that off. Now they are attempting to keep the gate open only for egress for the buses in the morning and after school, but the school is depending on a school employee to remember to go out and do that every day. There probably are moments when it hasn't been locked on time or it has been open longer than it should.

The intention of the school is to use it only for vehicle or bus traffic now, and for overflow parking on big nights, i.e. parent-teacher conferences, open house, school plays, school concerts, or that sort of thing. Mr. Matich asked if the bus traffic was going outside of that neighborhood or if they were going inside the neighborhood to Troy. Mr. Heitsch stated that it is one of the main thoroughfares for the buses that come down South Boulevard and come into the Middle School from the back end. So the buses could be coming from Troy and they could be leaving the Middle School to go to an elementary run that would probably be Deerfield in Rochester Hills or Woodland in Troy. It is about a 50/50 split. He stated that there are about 20 routes that come into that site for the Middle School and Meadows Elementary in the morning and in the afternoon; ten that come off of South Boulevard and ten that come off of Auburn Road.

Mr. Cardimen wanted it clarified that the gate would not be used at all next year. Mr. Heitsch stated that he would be happy to do that, but would like to be able to have it open during special or major events. He stated that he didn't intend for it to be open for bus traffic on a daily basis. Chairperson Colling stated that even if the gate is closed, kids might still be dropped off there. Mr. Heitsch stated that traffic did increase this year when they made it a longer walk for students to get to a bus stop.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Colling said that before he opened the matter up for discussion by the Board members he would like to give the people in attendance a chance to speak. He asked those who would like to comment to come up to the microphone and state their name and address.

Ms. Lorene Waldorf
3900 Alida Avenue
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-4247

Ms. Waldorf stated that she lived four blocks west of Cone. She said her child probably walks the farthest distance, more than a half a mile. She has no problem with children walking to and from school, but said we do need to make them safe. This gate had been closed for many years. It wasn't to be at the whim of the school whether to open it or close it. The administration at that time would absolutely not open it for any condition.

She was at the Traffic Board meeting in December and heard a lot about giving the school 30 days to respond and that where the City stood in 30 days would be given. This is three months later now. She believes that unless some type of barricade is put up, we are going to continue to have the same types of issues. She stated that they have always gotten in and out of both of those schools from the Auburn access without ever utilizing that gate. There is no guarantee when it will be open. Both of those schools weren't in session today, only the high school was, and the gate was still open.

She doesn't see the necessity for the gate, and feels it is dangerous. When she was at the meeting in December the Board agreed that it is dangerous, not solely for the students but also for the residents. She still gets people trying to beat the traffic on Cone Avenue going down her street. They come over the hill and turn left onto Alida, and it is dangerous. She would really like to know what the City is going to do to help us when it comes to this. She has been trying to stick to the safety program; she has brought these issues up with the superintendent, with the transportation department, and with the principals of those schools. The gate seems to only be a convenience factor. She has lived and scheduled things for years with that gate being closed. She knows that most people want to drop their children off at the door, but she would like to ask this Board why this matter was never taken to City Council when we said it would be, and here we are three months later.

Enter Board member Scott Hunter at 7:55 p.m.

Chairperson Colling stated that the Board wanted to get the school involved and that it took a little longer. He apologized for this and stated that once it is discussed, she will know where the Board stands.

Ms. Cheryl Kennedy
3690 Cone Avenue
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-4370

Ms. Kennedy stated that she has lived on Cone for twenty plus years, and her son has gone to Avondale schools his whole life. Unfortunately, they moved from one address on Cone to another on Cone. She never wanted that gate installed, and fought it from the

beginning. They were guaranteed that it would never be left open by the people at that time.

In the traffic study they had over forty cars going in excess of thirty miles an hour, some of them going 41 or 40 miles an hour. It is a bad situation.

She also paid to have that road put in. It was paved, and they were assessed. She doesn't think the school will help pay for it when it needs to be redone because of all the bus traffic that is on it that it was never planned to have.

Ms. Kennedy said she likes Avondale and she likes the subdivision, but it is ridiculous. She parks her cars on the street to try to block traffic so they have to slow down. She has walked out in the middle of the street. She has been given the finger and yelled at for parking in the street by parents. She has had buses stop and look at her because she has cars legally parked on both sides of the road. They stop and stare at her until they move one. This is what they deal with.

Ms. Sherri Siems
3714 Cone Avenue
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-4372

Ms Siems has a seventh grader at the middle school. She knows the gate is a convenience for everybody, but traffic is unbelievable. She stated that her husband hates leaving for work late because he sits in the driveway waiting forever to get out. When she picks her daughter up from school in the afternoon, the area between the gate and where Cone runs into Alsdorf is a nightmare. The buses beep at the kids to get out of their way. There are no sidewalks for these kids, where do they want them to go? When the kids are walking and there is snow on the road, the buses stop and lay on the horn for them to move. She feels the buses should go around to Auburn. She does not want them in the neighborhood. The streets are not designed for the buses, and there are no sidewalks.

When the weather gets better, all the kids that live across the street start walking to school too. She will not let her daughter walk to school as it is not safe. She said the middle school principal would not let the students ride their bikes to school as it is a safety issue, but we will let all these kids walk and fight the traffic and the buses. In kids versus a bus, kids versus a car, who's going to win? When one of those kids finally gets hit, it is not going to be a good thing.

If she pulls out of her driveway and goes 20 miles per hour, others are right on her tail all the way down the road. She has talked to transportation and has been told there is nothing they can do, as the gate and road are needed for a shortcut. The gate was not designed as a shortcut; it was designed for emergency vehicles only. That is what it needs to go back to.

Ms. Nancy Ahern
3666 Cone Avenue
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-4370-4376

Ms. Ahern stated that she has lived on Cone Avenue for 28 years, and appreciated the gate open. She hated to say that, as she doesn't like the traffic speeds and the hazard that it causes to the children that are trying to walk. The kids do not really walk on only one side, they split. They'll go on one side and then switch to the other, or a group will come one way on both sides of the road. It is a very dangerous situation. She does appreciate the gate open as a convenience to her, so she doesn't have to go out to the main road and go around. If there is an emergency and she has to get up there to get her child, she can get there and back quickly. She also parks cars on the street to try and get traffic to realize they have to slow down.

Mr. Ryan Reef
3960 Cone Avenue
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-4396

Mr. Reef wanted to reiterate everything that was already said. On a separate but related issue, when folks are turning left onto Cone off of South Boulevard going north to get to the open gate, he thinks Cone is the only street in that area-that has no STOP sign from South all the way up to the gate. At Cone and Grace there is a four-way intersection with no STOP sign. There is a YIELD sign, which everybody blows right through. There are accidents, near accidents, often. There are excessive speeds from the cars going down the streets to get to that open gate at the school. They live in a subdivision that happens to have no sidewalks. Most people use the street where there are no STOP signs and it is a straight shot to the open gate. It has gotten significantly worse since the gate has been opened.

Chairperson Colling stated that public comment was now closed and the matter would now be opened up to the Board. He said that he would like to summarize what he had heard. Those that were in the adjacent area are against the gate being open 100%. Those that utilize it and live farther away like it as it saves them time. This was the second instance that he had heard of the bus drivers blowing their horns at kids and yelling for them to get out of the road. He stated that if he were the superintendent and he got reports that his bus drivers were doing that, there would be a couple of bus drivers fired. The safety of the kids comes first, whether they are in the bus or walking along the road.

Chairperson Colling thought there are several things that are wrong here, including the visibility and no speed controls to slow down vehicles on that street. He doesn't want to put in STOP signs as a means of speed control, but there are other things that can be done. A crossing guard is needed. There are kids crossing the through street to get into the local school that are walking unsupervised.

There also needs to be a drop off area, and there isn't one. It is adding to the problem that parents in vehicles are backing up and turning around to go back out of the

subdivision. The street is substandard, as it is not wide enough. The road is going to need engineering work and sidewalks. There should be a drop off point on the school property, and the school is going to have to cooperate and build one.

The bus routes are already set for this year, so he realizes nothing can be done this year. Next year that gate is going to have to remain closed or blocked off until some sort of remediation is completed for the kids walking to school, and the drop off traffic hazard is gotten rid of. It is the parents' and the schools' responsibility to educate the kids on how to walk on one side of the road and not in spread out groups, so they are not blocking traffic. The kids have a responsibility in this too. We should put a sidewalk in, at least by the time you get to the school property, so the kids can get out of the way. Whether the subdivision wants to see if they can put in a bike path or an extended walkway in the sub is up to them, as they would have to pay for it as a special assessment. There is a lot that needs to be done here, or should be done, before it is considered safe.

Mr. Cardimen stated that he drove there today and he drove it all the way, past the open gate. The gate wasn't locked or barricaded, and he wondered why it wasn't. He didn't understand why it is so critical for the fire and police departments to have it open. Unless the City comes up with some options on what the City might do, he feels the gate should remain closed permanently, with no exceptions. He would have the police out there and if anyone wanted to drop their kids off in that area, they would be ticketed. This has to be a safety issue, and unless there is an alternative that he would agree to, he feels it should remain closed.

Mr. Moore stated that for the safety of the children, the bus schedule should be changed now, not next year. He feels the gate should be locked tomorrow for their safety

Mr. Franklin agreed that the gate should be closed. He thought there should be some kind of barricade on Alsdorf so that cars do not go down there to use that corner as a drop off point. He is concerned, as he doesn't know how that can be stopped. He also is concerned that people go down Cone to the gate and then have to turn around. He said that should not be allowed.

Mr. Blackstone said he was curious whether there had been any children injured over the years or struck by cars in this area. A resident stated that a child had been hurt, not this year but last. Mr. Heitsch said that this was the first year that children were walking to school. Chairperson Colling stated that there was no record from any agency of any accident in that area. If there was an accident it obviously was not a major injury and wasn't reported.

Mr. Blackstone asked how long the gate has been open. Chairperson Colling said that the gate was closed in the beginning and this problem didn't exist at that time. It remained closed for a number of years. It was opened during construction and it was supposed to be reclosed at the end of the construction.

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Mr. Shumejko stated that for clarification the gate was never required by the City, it was something that was put in voluntarily by the school for their own reasons. Chairperson Colling said that the Board recommended to the school board that there be an emergency access. The school put in the gated entrance, and for a lot of years it was locked. Now is the time to deal with it.

Mr. Hunter asked if there were two sidewalks on Fantail to the school property, which was confirmed. Mr. Shumejko said that they have already had reports of vehicles driving the pathway. Subsequently, the City has posted NO MOTOR VEHICLE signs there, and enforcement is the responsibility of the Sheriff's patrol. You will then shift the drop off point. Mr. Hunter stated that it was just another option for drop off.

Chairperson Colling said that he agreed with everything the Board had to say. His opinion is to block this off and not allow drop off until such time as the school builds a drop off area further up on their property, not where the gate is now, where parents can pull in. You can stack up 8-10 cars, let people drop off and go around and out to the north or south side of the street. This way it gets the congestion off of Alsdorf and Cone.

The City has to make a decision, does it want to own the roadway or not? If they do, some improvements need to be made; speed humps, lighting, and with the cooperation and financial support of the schools, sidewalks on the school property down to Alsdorf, and some adult supervision (crossing guard or police). He thought buses should be able to use that route from time to time if it is necessary. The primary issue is to make sure the kids are safe.

Chairperson Colling said that he would like to see the school board and the City work together and have the City take over that roadway, if that is what the City wants. Chairperson Colling asked the City staff if it were a viable option that the City would want to take this roadway over and make the necessary improvements. Was this something that would happen in six months to a year?

Mr. Shumejko explained that the original intent was to have the road as a public through street with a signalized intersection at Auburn. He didn't know if school funding would be available, but obviously the cost factor is going to be the challenge to bring the road up to specifications with its inadequate width, and in some areas the sidewalk is ending at dirt. The City has a concern that a lot of the traffic now is going to be forced to make a left on Livernois to turn onto Auburn. You may minimize the traffic on Cone, but may just transfer the traffic to another area in the subdivision. He added that the existing traffic volumes are not out of the norm for a typical City subdivision.

Chairperson Colling stated that most of the problems that come before the Traffic Board have to do with getting kids to school and speeding. There is a problem here that needs to be fixed. We have the superintendent of schools that is willing to spend some of his money, we have the City that wants to take over this roadway, and we have a rare opportunity to do it right.

Mr. Shumejko said assuming that we get the support from the residents along Cone to install traffic calming speed humps, staff would like to pursue getting them constructed. Whether that is done through the Safe Routes to School program funding mechanism or alternately, as Cone Road was originally identified to be a collector street, our current CIP allows for funding 100% of the speed humps for major collector type roads in subdivisions. We did discuss bringing the sidewalk through the school's property up to Alsdorf and creating a ramp at each slated intersection to get students off the roadway and have them cross at an intersection.

Chairperson Colling asked that if all these improvements were done, would anyone have any objection to the City taking this street over from the gate to Auburn Road. A couple of residents spoke concerned about having quite a bit more traffic when this happened. Chairperson Colling didn't think they would have much more traffic than what they are experiencing now, because it looks like a road to the school and people wouldn't realize it was a through street.

Mr. Matich asked if and when this happened could Mr. Heitsch not have the buses go through the subdivision. Mr. Heitsch said if it were important to the community, but they had to have the opportunity to build routes with that kind of extra time put in. Mr. Matich stated with a NO LEFT TURN sign for the school driveway nobody would come through the subdivision.

A resident said that when the gate was locked, most parents would not drop students off there, but would drive around and take them to the parent loop. In the afternoon it was more common to tell their kids that they would meet them at the gate area. It wasn't an extreme amount like they have now, which is more because students for both schools are coming at the same time. She feels keeping the gates locked is no big deal.

Ms. Kennedy stated they were told in the beginning when the school was being put in that it would never be a through street. Now they are being told differently. Now they are being considered a collector street, soon to be a through street. This is not where she wants this going. Chairperson Colling responded that we didn't anticipate the amount of traffic and the change in people's attitudes in allowing their kids to walk to school.

Ms. Kennedy said that the Board would not have Oakland County's support. She has called year after year and they have not shown up. Chairperson Colling stated that now she has the support of the City and the school board. And if her true intent is the safety of the children, this will get her improvements to the area and a sidewalk for the kids to walk on. He would think they would rather open it up and get these improvements if it was going to solve the problem and keep the kids safe.

Ms. Kennedy added that the traffic study that was done was ridiculous and that the cars were going way over 29 miles per hour. The device used to measure the speeds was placed in an area where cars were already slowing down. Chairperson Colling offered that the placement of speed humps through there would reduce the speed of vehicles.

Mr. Cardimen said that it seems there is both a short and a long-term issue. The long-term issue is that the school board and the City need to get together with a comprehensive approach to solving this problem, and it comes back to whether or not the City can take over this road and make the improvements. He was more concerned with what we are going to do now and in the next 90 days while we still have the school buses running through there. What do we do to try and help the kids, tonight?

Chairperson Colling asked both staff and Mr. Webber, "What are the odds that the City is going to be able to take this road over and will be able to do the improvements?" Mr. Shumejko felt the City would be supportive and cooperative with the schools to move forward with this. The time frame would probably be two years, at the least. Mr. Webber stated that we know who the target audience is and we know who these drivers are. He asked if there has been any information given to the parents to get them to slow down.

Mr. Heitsch noted that it was a pretty controversial issue among the middle school parents that live in that area. He said safety messages go out regularly in the principal's newsletters. It may not be specific to this situation, but they remind parents all the time about student/car interactions and students walking to school. He also said that he talks to the bus drivers on a regular basis about safety.

Mr. Webber said it was probably not the intent for the road to work like that. Other neighborhoods do have blockades right between the subdivision and the schools. He wouldn't object to that because he felt that was the original intent. If the City did take over the entire road there would have to be improvements. He said he would like to find out what the fire and police departments' objections are, especially since the gate had previously been closed for a number of years. Their opinions do carry weight with him.

Mr. Cardimen asked why the City would want to take over this road.

Mr. Matich explained that the subdivision was platted with a dead-end road. The road was built and eventually evolved into the subdivision limits. The middle school was under construction when they started negotiations about building the road. The State was not going to give a traffic signal at that location until the City told them that they would build Cone as a through street, but when it was built it wasn't built to City standards. Mr. Matich stated that the school couldn't change the bus stops until they have sent notification to every individual, giving them a ninety-day notice. So it is not reasonable to tell someone that they are going to have their bus stop changed for this school year.

Chairperson Colling stated that he would like to propose a two-part motion; one for immediate action and the other for later consideration. **First**, Chairperson Colling would like to have Mr. Heitsch notify the parents that the drop-off point is not at Alsdorf and Cone, but they need to drive to an area inside the school property. He would also like that to be enforced by the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, who will issue tickets if they have to. **Second**, he would like the school to participate in the Safe Routes to School Program immediately. **Third**, he would like to see some education regarding walking to school. Chairperson Colling explained he would like to have everyone

involved: students, parents, the PTA, and the school. **Fourth**, he would like to proceed now to have street lighting installed at the corner of Alsdorf and Cone. Winter months are the most dangerous as the kids are walking in the dark with dark-colored jackets and are not easily seen. **Fifth**, a crossing guard needs to be installed there. Just the presence of a crossing guard might calm some of this traffic down. **Sixth** and last, we close that gate during regular hours. Close it at 9:30 a.m. and reopen it at 2:30 p.m. like clockwork. This will be for the remainder of this school year. For next year, if the City hasn't made any improvements, the same thing is in effect. Chairperson Colling recommended that the buses not use that southern route next school year.

For his long-term recommendation Chairperson Colling suggested that staff provide a study to the school board and to City council listing the requirements to turn this road over to the City, and what should be done to make it a safe situation for the students, the school, and the neighborhood.

Mr. Moore asked that it not be a street anymore for South Boulevard and Cone, and Auburn at Cone. Chairperson Colling stated that he would wait on any action to see whether the City wanted to take it over. If the City did not take it over, then that might be an approach to take.

Mr. Moore also commented on the cut through traffic. Chairperson Colling stated that he would like to have some traffic counters out there and record license plates numbers to see what they are dealing with, and to make sure the numbers are actually good. Mr. Hunter suggested that they do a speed study at Cone and Ruby.

Mr. Franklin stated he was in favor of most of the ideas for short-term fixes, but he still had a problem with the decision of making this a through street.

Chairperson Colling stated that the feasibility study doesn't mean the City is going to take the road over. City Council and the Mayor may decide they don't want to do this. Right now, before we take any action other than the short-term measures, the school board and the City need to make that decision because that will definitely affect the long-term measures.

Mr. Franklin said that he had no problem with the study; he just had a problem with it becoming a through street. He felt people were going to find a way to get from Crooks to Livernois.

Mr. Cardimen stated that he would like to move forward with both motions, but that he would like to see the Oakland County Sheriff's Department out there now. Chairperson Colling said that having the Oakland County Sheriff's Department patrol there would have a good short-term affect, probably sixty to ninety days. After that, it is pretty well lost until they make a concerted effort there again. He recommended on-going enforcement until this is resolved; hit it regularly every three or four months.

Mr. Moore asked if the gates remained closed in the summertime. Mr. Heitsch stated that he honestly didn't know.

Chairperson Colling said that the short-term measures we listed tonight will help make it safer, but it is not the overall solution. If the City were not to take over the roadway, we would have to take the recommendation of the school board to address the turn-around situation and come to some kind of conclusion so this does not become an issue in the neighborhood again. Chairperson Colling did not want to waste a whole lot of time on studies if the decision to take over the roadway by the City has not been made. The City and the School Board need to decide whether this is going to become a public road or not.

Mr. Matich wanted to make sure of the hours of operation of the gate. He would like to see it open only from 6:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. and from 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Chairperson Colling stated that the school has to be religious on the gate closures to help this situation.

A resident spoke and stated that once the gate is closed the parents will not drive their kids that way anymore, and the problem will be solved. She felt the gate just needed to be locked. The drive wouldn't have to be made a street, and buses didn't need to be going down their street. Just lock the gate like it used to be and they didn't have this issue.

Chairperson Colling stated he was reluctant to do that because if for whatever reason we lock the gate and people are still dropping off their kids at the gate, a traffic problem will still be there. He will not be as sympathetic the next time it comes before the Board. He said he would like to do the studies, see the results, and do the right thing from that point on. Whether or not the gate stays locked or the road becomes a City road, most of the things that are being recommended are going to help the kids in the area anyway."

Mr. Cardimen made a motion to agree with everything that was suggested. Mr. Blackstone read the items for the motion.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

1. School notifies parents of a different drop off point.
2. School develops safe walk route for students.
3. Traffic to be enforced by OCSD for the next 90 days.
4. Post a crossing guard in the area.
5. Close the gate between drop off times.
6. Gate to be permanently closed at the end of this school year.

LONG TERM ACTIONS:

1. Staff provides a study with a view toward turning access from the schools to Auburn.

2. Staff performs a cut through study to see what kind of traffic is still trying to go through to avoid Livernois.

Chairperson Colling stated that if the City and the School Board decide not to take this roadway over, chances are the recommendations will change and this will come back before the Board. At that time, Chairperson Colling's recommendation will be to permanently block this off. Right now, he is going to leave the gate open and try to get something done for the safety of the kids.

Mr. Franklin seconded the motion, and asked if the drive at Auburn where the traffic light is had a name. Mr. Matich stated that it was a private drive. Mr. Franklin suggested that if it ever did receive a name he would like it to be something other than Cone. He would also like it to be specified that the drop off points at both schools be accessed from Auburn Road. Chairperson Colling stated that he didn't think the Board could dictate from where the schools were accessed. The intent was to prevent the traffic from stopping at Cone and Alsdorf.

Mr. Moore asked if the gate would be permanently closed at the end of the school year. Mr. Heitsch stated that it will not be open to car traffic but it may be open for construction traffic. Chairperson Colling stated he would like to make that another immediate condition. He would also like the gate to be closed over extended school breaks, like Easter or Christmas.

Mr. Heitsch stated that it would be easier to just put a barricade up. The school owns the gate. The Board can make all the recommendations they want, but the reality is the Board is telling him what to do. Chairperson Colling said that the school created the situation out there and next year the gate will be closed, but in the interim something has to be done to correct the situation. Mr. Heitsch asked which one of the Board members would be willing to come to the Board of Education and help him explain all this. Chairperson Colling said he would be glad to do so. Chairperson Colling said these conditions are only until the decision is made as to whether the City is going to improve the roadway or not. These conditions will only be in place until the end of the school year. If there isn't a decision from the City and the School Board on whether the City will be taking over this roadway by the end of the summer, then it will come back before the Board and he will barricade it.

Mr. Cardimen stated that the Board could just barricade it today and the school would have to react, but the Board is trying to work with the schools so that the planning and the transportation programs can move forward. Chairperson Colling said that the Board's original reaction was to blockade that entrance, but wanted to hear the school's position. That is why Mr. Heitsch was asked to attend tonight's meeting. It is a short-term solution, and we have to do this until school is closed for this year. Lock the gate for summer, and we don't revisit it until the fall.

Chairperson Colling asked for a roll call vote for the motion on the floor. .

Blackstone: Aye
Cardimen: Aye
Colling: Aye
Franklin: Aye
Hunter: Aye
Moore: Aye
Schneck: Absent

MOTION CARRIED

Chairperson Colling wanted to clarify what was going to happen between the school and the City. They will try to keep the gate locked as much as possible. It will be open for the remainder of the school year between the hours they voted on. When school closes at the end of the year, the gate will be locked. Hopefully, by the time school reopens in the fall, we will know whether the City is going to take this road over or it is going to remain school property. Chairperson Colling asked that staff make sure this matter gets to City council long before then. We will bring this back before the Board with a decision as to whether it is going to be taken over by the City and where we go from there. If it turns out the City does not take this over, or even if they do, we will invite everyone back to let them know that this is coming back before the Board.

A concerned student spoke about the bus drivers speeding. He said the bus drivers were also being rude and beeping at the students walking to school. He felt someone needed to talk to all the bus drivers and ask them to slow down, or fire them. Mr. Heitsch commented that all the buses are now equipped with GPS units, so they will know if they are speeding. They just needed to know the bus route and the bus number and they would check that out. He said to call the superintendent's office and leave the information.

The Board took a five-minute recess.

Meeting called back to order at 9:05 p.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Moore stated that elected officers were to be in their position for a year. Since we had just had election of officers in August, he felt they were to hold these positions for a year from that date. Mr. Shumejko stated that the trigger was March, but last year's election got delayed. Chairperson Colling stated that it was a one-year deal and he agreed to hold the election in July or August of 2009.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Franklin stated that there were several times in the last few months he was at Hollywood Market and attempted to make a left turn, and barely escaped with his life. When you make a left turn there, there is no turn lane to turn in to, and there are three lanes of traffic to look at. Going the other way there are two lanes of traffic, and one lane left turns into Papa Joe's. If someone is trying to make a left out of Hollywood there is an awful lot to deal with. The driveway in the back of the store is almost as difficult to get out of. He would like the Board to take a look at it and see what can be done. He doesn't see any solution other than "NO LEFT TURN" signage there.

Chairperson Colling suggested putting a staggered, short light at the intersection along with Papa Joe's driveway that is timed with the other light. Mr. Shumejko stated that the distance is insufficient. He explained that in the original design this was going to be a right in, right out only. The developer was opposed to that, so it became a full access right of way. Mr. Shumejko said that the area west of this property was slated for improvements in 2011. If you are heading westbound, technically you are not supposed to enter the left turn lane where the dual left is, because of the way it is striped. You are supposed to stay in a lane to make your left.

Mr. Shumejko said it was up to the property manager of the site, and at the time when this was going in they were not responsive to doing any restrictions for either of these driveways. Unless we get their cooperation, the only thing the Road Commission can legally do is install a sign that says "NO LEFT TURNS" based on the crash data. They typically look for three to five crashes per year before they would consider this. At this time, it does not meet warrants.

Chairperson Colling stated that there has to be a better answer and we have to figure out what it is. He asked what distance is needed between signals. Mr. Shumejko responded it was typically a quarter mile, or about 1,250 feet. Normally with any Environmental Assessment or any project that is federal funded, the road agency would perform a road safety audit of the whole corridor. The proposed project is from Livernois to Sheldon. Staff could reinforce the request that the Road Commission look at this area during the traffic safety audit for the Tienken Road Corridor improvements project.

Chairperson Colling suggested that they wait and see what happens with this study. Mr. Franklin stated that he would like to look at the Road Commission's study when it is finished.

Mr. Shumejko wanted to let everyone know that the City was hosting a public information meeting here at City Hall regarding the Hamlin Road Project on Wednesday, March 18, 2009. It will be an informal meeting to come in and look at the plans, and find out what to expect during the project. The project is set to start on March 30, 2009, and the utilities are being relocated right now.

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Mr. Franklin asked if his subdivision had all the criteria to qualify for installation of speed humps. Mr. Shumejko replied yes, if it was a collector or City major road. He explained there is a petition process they would have to go through. They would need a resolution from the Board indicating their support, and 100% approval from those homes that directly front the speed humps. City staff would work with the homeowner's association to determine the locations of the speed humps. There are a lot of challenges in Cumberland Hills because of the driveway locations. The staggering of the driveways is pretty much consistent.

Chairperson Colling noted that M-59 is going to be widened with stimulus money. He asked that projects that might be brought forward as a result of stimulus money be brought before the Board. Mr. Shumejko stated that stimulus money is only available for roads that are on the federal aid list. The City was working with MDOT to get the Crooks Road Bridge back on line.

Hearing nothing further to come before the Board, Chairperson Colling asked for a motion to adjourn. After hearing a motion and a second, he adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.