

VILLAGE OF BARTLETT
COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 3, 2015

President Wallace called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Trustee Camerer, Carbonaro, Martin, Reinke, and Shipman

Absent: Trustee Arends

Also Present: Village Clerk Lorna Giless, Village Administrator Valerie L. Salmons, Assistant Village Administrator Paula Schumacher, Assistant to the Village Administrator Scott Skrycki, Finance Director Jeff Martynowicz, Community Development Director Jim Plonczynski, Building Director Brian Goralski, Public Works Director Dan Dinges, Public Works Engineer Bob Allen, Chief Kent Williams, Head Golf Professional Phil Lenz, and Attorney Bryan Mraz

PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE

Stearns Road/Rt. 59 IDOT Improvements

Chairman Camerer asked Community Development Director Jim Plonczynski to review the agenda item.

J. Plonczynski explained that the Stearns Road/Rt. 59 Improvements Project has been before the Village Board last August. IDOT gave the Village a diagram that basically is the diagram on the screen (referring to exhibit). The revision is only on the east leg of the project. The remaining north/south, which is the Rt. 59 legs and the Stearns Road westbound leg remain the same as the Board has previously seen, which basically is the two left turn lanes in each direction and then thru lanes, and a wider cross-section of intersection, new traffic signals at all different legs, and dedicated turn lane signals that you can only turn during the cycle that allows for the turn lane. At that meeting, we had some input from some residents and particularly the shopping center owner who owns the northeast corner of Stearns and Rt. 59, where the Walgreens is, the daycare center, and Brewster Creek to the north. That was the subject of discussion at the public hearing that IDOT had as well as the shopping center owner requesting that the Village support his request to DuPage County, to allow access rather than close it off in the original design, to allow access into the shopping center. He explained that the County has worked with IDOT design engineers and came back with the plan that is before the Board, "The Revised Design Plan for Stearns Road". Essentially, the orange lane, which used to be a left turn lane on southbound Rt. 59 (referring to exhibit) was reversed in the design and now becomes an eastbound left turn lane into the shopping center where the Walgreens is and into the daycare center which is just east of the Walgreens. There will only be one southbound left turn lane. They had to maintain the geometry through the

width of each side of Stearns Road. Again, this will be the same width, but they reversed this southbound turn lane into an eastbound left turn lane in order to go into the shopping center and daycare center in a dedicated left turn lane. That's the major change to the design that the Board did not see back in August. In addition with the revised plan, the County is requesting that the Village adopt an ordinance restricting A.M. and P.M. peak hour left turn lane movement from the shopping center access point.

Trustee Martin asked if the light is red and everyone is lining up, can the lane be striped so drivers will leave a space.

J. Plonczynski responded there is no striping. They specifically took that out; it's a design criteria because they want the traffic to queue up as far as they can and get through the intersection during a cycle. So, the northbound right turns will continue right here (referring to exhibit), your through lanes and your left turns. That being said, the Village' traffic engineer reviewed the revisions and one of his concerns with the design is the queueing of the left turn lane. He is concerned that cars will be queueing up past the intersection and will prevent the left turn in there. IDOT and the County doesn't believe, at this time, because it's designed for current traffic, that this queueing will occur based on current traffic conditions because the left turn southbound onto Rt. 59 is the least movement of all the different configurations. Another concern is that they stripe additional tapering, so instead of being a long left turn lane from the intersection of the shopping center all the way to Braintree Lane, that they break it up past the driveway where the daycare center is and then stripe it so there is another left turn lane designated going into Braintree Lane.

Trustee Martin asked if there is a hard curb in front of that.

J. Plonczynski responded no, at this stage is it not a designed raised curb, just a striped median. The lane will all be the same level with striping on the street.

Chairman Camerer clarified that there is no actual barrier between the east and west traffic flow, or is there a gap for the shopping center in two different areas.

J. Plonczynski responded no, it is all level pavement with no separation. In the original design, this was a barrier median (referring to exhibit), but the barrier median is coming out because the southbound turn lane is now going to be an eastbound turn lane into the shopping center and the daycare.

Trustee Reinke asked if the Village is aware of any intersections in the area that utilize a similar configuration.

J. Plonczynski responded that he is not aware of any that have the same kind of left turn lane. With the previous design, Dan Dinges researched some intersections and Randall and Stearns Road in South Elgin had a similar design with the dual lefts at all intersections along with the barrier medians. That intersection is designed like the Stearns Road/Rt.

59 intersection was originally. The change has only come about because of the Village's support of the shopping center owner in his request to have the access point kept open.

Trustee Reinke stated that the Village wants to support the shopping center, but it is concerning that this is a somewhat unusual configuration. He stated that he wants to make sure that it works in the real world.

J. Plonczynski responded that we can ask the County if there are any other intersections similar to Stearns Road/Rt. 59. What makes the intersection unique, is the entrance to the shopping center is only 125 feet from the stop bar. You might find other configurations where you have turning into an eastbound or westbound left turn lane, but the close proximity of the shopping center entrance is what makes this unique. If you go on the west leg of this, where the Home Depot is located, that intersection is much further west so they were able to accommodate an easy flow into the Home Depot.

President Wallace commented that it is a design created by the DuPage County Traffic engineers.

J. Plonczynski stated that they created it based on trying to maintain access to the shopping center. They believe it will work with the caveat that we also have no left turns out during peak hours.

Trustee Shipman asked why IDOT originally thought that it was in everybody's best interest to have the double turn lane headed westbound, but now they're saying that we really don't need that.

J. Plonczynski responded that in talking to the engineers, the design engineers originally looked at the design mainly to continue to allow left turns out of the center, keeping this a dual left out, and putting a gap in the dual lefts. They did not feel that was safe. So they felt that they had to create this turn lane in and allow a limited turn lane out.

Trustee Shipman stated that he understands why the County made the revisions, but why did they say in the original design that two left turn lanes were needed going westbound and now since the Village has raised the shopping center issue, they are saying that we really don't need two left turn lanes.

Trustee Reinke stated that what Trustee Shipman has said make a lot of sense. He stated that he would like to hear from the Village's engineer. He is not concerned about what the State or the County wants to do, but wants to make sure the Village is doing the right thing for the residents and make sure it is safe. He stated that he is more comfortable with the Village's engineer rendering an opinion than some other engineer.

J. Plonczynski explained that the Village's traffic consultant, Brent Coulter, does not believe that the proposed configuration is safe.

Chairman Camerer asked if there are no other intersections that are comparable to the proposed design, how can the traffic consultant make that determination.

J. Plonczynski responded that Mr. Coulter is looking at other intersections around the area. This design (referring to exhibit) is safer than what we currently have, if you look at it in that context.

Trustee Martin asked if the traffic consultant has suggested another configuration.

J. Plonczynski responded that in this design (referring to exhibit) he agrees with the no left turn out peak time. He believes we should extend the striping so you don't have a constant; you break it up to go to Braintree Lane and he is concerned about the queueing. There's no design for that; it's just going to be where you have to let those people gap in there. The other entrance into the Walgreens is coming off north and into the new right turn in that's just north of the building. That's how it was with the original design; they felt people would go up that way.

Trustee Carbonaro commented that way would be safer.

President Wallace asked to see the exhibit showing the queued up cars. He stated that he drove the road for four years. In all the four years with the morning traffic, there were never more than two or three cars lined up in that left turn lane.

Trustee Shipman disagreed stating that he does it every morning and there is frequently more than two or three cars lined up.

Trustee Reinke stated that it his experience as well.

Trustee Shipman stated that is the route he takes to work every morning and is at that location around 7:15-7:30 a.m.

Trustee Martin commented that it seems funny that all of a sudden this new design will work and we don't need two lanes when that's what they said we needed from the beginning.

President Wallace stated that the whole idea is to try to get it to un-stack back to Braintree Lane. When you're adding a two lanes, you are un-stacking it.

Administrator Salmons stated that there has been substantially less traffic now that the construction of the Beaver Pond drainage area is completed. There was a lot of construction traffic and people who had different patterns given that. She stated that she goes that way several times a day and there is a lot less traffic there now than there was six months ago.

President Wallace stated that the way he looks at it is what it is now and what it will be if the revised design comes to fruition. He agreed 100% with Jim's comment that the new

design is safer than what we have now, because you have more space, less stacking, and the ability to come out during non-peak hours and make a left turn and you've actually got a landing lane to come out onto. Instead of just coming right out into traffic, you've got that left turn lane that is dedicated for left turns where you are landing before getting into traffic.

Trustee Shipman stated that he agrees that any of the proposals would be safer than what there is now. He commented that he is trying to see exactly what it is we are trying to accomplish.

J. Plonczynski explained that IDOT wants the Village to sign off on either this design or tell them that we don't like it.

Trustee Shipman asked by doing these designs, what are we trying to do; are we saying that the problem that we are trying to alleviate is people turning left out of Brewster Creek or turning left across Stearns to get into Brewster Creek; are those are problems. And if those are the problems and we went to the original IDOT design to prevent them, then what other problems are we creating and how do we address those? Is that what we are trying to do?

President Wallace responded that the original problem with IDOT's original proposal was a shopping center killer because you can't get in and out of it during regular hours and you have to go around the block to get to a convenient store. Proposing that someone from the west side of town wants to go to Walgreens, they go in there and then they have to loop out and stay at the stoplight as opposed to going the other way down Stearns Road and to the Walgreens on the other end of town. Convenience is what we had an issue with because of the barrier median.

Trustee Martin stated that now when people turn south, some people turn north; the opposite. Some lights have one side go and then the other side goes. If you take the middle where you can turn south or go straight, either one, that would have to be all at the same time.

J. Plonczynski explained that the turn lanes are dedicated turn lanes only; they are not through lanes and turn lanes. If you are getting the left turn signal, you have to turn; you cannot go straight.

President Wallace clarified that DuPage has looked at this and it is their road and they said that the proposed design is fine with them.

J. Plonczynski responded that the design is fine with them if the Village passes an ordinance regarding the left turn out during peak hours.

President Wallace stated that he looks at the situation twofold – what things can we do to make sure that we are protecting people that are driving and what can we do to make sure that the businesses are not unequally yoked with some type of a traffic pattern we

have created. Part of the discussion is do we try to regulate and manipulate traffic to a point where we are becoming a nanny of how you drive. People are going to drive crazy no matter what the road set-up is.

Trustee Carbonaro asked what the purpose is for the optional traffic light.

J. Plonczynski explained that it is an idea that the traffic engineer had as an alternate controlled access out of the shopping center.

Trustee Carbonaro clarified that you could turn left, come to the traffic light, make a safe left turn at Rt. 59 and Stearns, turn left and go eastbound on Stearns Road and not have to cross three lanes.

J. Plonczynski responded that the light is not in the current program for this intersection improvement; it would have to be an "ask" to the IDOT District 1 Engineer. Obviously, since it's a signal that the Village is asking for, we may have to pay a large portion of it, if it evens meets the warrants.

Chairman Camerer stated that as part of the discussions at other meetings, wasn't it determined that Norwood was still too close to the existing light at Stearns and 59 to have another light at that location.

J. Plonczynski responded yes, that was one of their concerns.

Chairman Camerer stated that it is not just a cost issue. In theory, let's say that the Village could pay for the light, we would still have to go through the State to get it taken care of and meet the warrants.

Trustee Carbonaro commented that Roberta Grill has had some conversations with them already.

J. Plonczynski stated that there has been some discussion and they did not include it; they did not feel it was needed. Our traffic engineer threw it out there as an alternate to consider, but it is something the Village would have to ask for.

Trustee Carbonaro asked Chief Williams which would be the safer of the two; looking for a left turn lane on Stearns Road or putting a light at Norwood.

K. Williams responded that there are a lot of moving parts to the situation. He stated that he is not a traffic engineer and will be tasked with making whatever decision the Board makes, the safest as possible. Clearly, the safest design is the first one, but there are some issues at hand.

Trustee Reinke stated that when the matter comes before the Board again, he would like the traffic consultant to be at that meeting. It is important to look at the data, specifically regarding the stacking. He stated that he would like to talk about the off-set and whether

or not his plan to deal with the off-sets is going to work. By creating the left hand turn lane, it seems that you are inviting someone to head north, which is a good thing; we want to encourage commerce, but at the same time, you are encouraging them to make a left across several lanes of traffic. He stated that he would like the Village's consultant to talk about that. President Wallace is right in that we can't be nannies of traffic, but at the same time, we can't set this up to make headlines.

Administrator Salmons stated that she will arrange for Brent Coulter to be at the next Board meeting.

Trustee Shipman stated that west of the intersection, there is a similar situation with the turn-in into Home Depot. He asked what the IDOT plans called for with that.

J. Plonczynski responded that originally, they had a barrier median. It mirrored this (referring to exhibit) and DuPage County, at the initial review, because that Home Depot entrance is further away and lined up with the one in Bartlett Commons, they put the striping so you can make the left turn. It's much further away from this stop bar and they felt it was safe to keep that open. They could have done that at the Walgreens site if the shopping center entrance was over here somewhere (referring to exhibit).

Trustee Martin asked if it is a County thing, because in Cook County, where the Dairy Queen is located, you've got two sets of striping right before the Lake Street intersection.

J. Plonczynski explained that Stearns is a County road; the east/west leg is a County road. They have a review of the IDOT plans just like we do. Some towns, if they don't have a dog in that fight, they just let them figure it out between themselves. We, because we went to bat for the shopping center owner, didn't have to do it on the west side because the County already did it for us. The east side, this is closer, so that's why they came up with this design with the caveat.

D. Cortesi, shopping center owner, stated that the Village went to bat for all the commercial properties. He stated that Brewster Creek is, by far, the most successful commercial property. It's not the first time that IDOT has come up with a set of plans. IDOT's plans are based off of what their current thinking is and somewhere down the line is the interest of the property owners and the community. He stated that IDOT will work with you. About 15 years ago, IDOT was going to put up all barrier curbs along Rt. 59 and possibly onto Stearns Road also. Bartlett convinced IDOT to do the four corners that we have now. They are not the greatest four corners of commercial in the world, but would hate to see what it would be if those barrier medians were not rejected by Bartlett, rejected by the property owners and turned around. The revised plan is considered safer by both DuPage County and by IDOT that the current plan for Stearns Road was. We are starting with a plan that is safer, but can you do something that would make it safer still; probably. But, this is safer than what is currently there and approved both by IDOT and DuPage County. And, it's for the shopping centers. It will help Brewster Creek but also help bring people to the Dominick's center. The revised plan is essential to the commercial viability of Brewster Creek.

R. Lewis, 868 Braintree Lane, stated that it is interesting that neither plan addresses the real issue for the shopping center or for the residents of Braintree Lane, which is the ability to exit the shopping center during peak time. In looking at the revised plan, we create yet still a problem. Before we had a barrier and you couldn't turn out at peak times and now we have a no left turn out at peak times. That's a huge problem; there's nowhere for these folks to go, of course, other than to cut down Braintree Lane and even that becomes a dangerous intersection when you have that much traffic. The idea of a stoplight at Norwood Lane and Rt. 59 does, in fact, help solve that problem. In the Schaumburg area, there are areas where lights are even closer to the intersection. He stated that if he were to put a stoplight, he would move it even closer to the intersection on the common exit from this shopping, but also the other shopping center across Rt. 59. He explained that in his discussions with IDOT, there was discussion that if you put a stoplight there, that's really to the benefit of the shopping center and the Village and someone else would have to pay for that. That's the wrong way to look at it. This improvement at the intersection, which is needed, is actually causing a problem for the shopping center. It's not a matter of it being a benefit; it's causing harm to that commercial property. Including a stoplight would make sense as part of this overall project.

President Wallace reiterated that Mr. Lewis was talking about a stoplight at the middle of the shopping center that would connect both centers across. He asked if the Village has ever looked into a light at that location.

J. Plonczynski explained that the Village's traffic consultant didn't believe that IDOT would look at it, but again, it's an "ask" to them. He felt because it is further away and at an intersection with a Village road, that IDOT would more likely include this in the program rather than one that they term as a private benefit because it's two shopping centers; it's not on a Village road.

President Wallace commented that he has seen lights like that on Barrington Road. There is a similar situation on Barrington Road where Sam's Club and Walmart are located.

J. Plonczynski stated that either way, we have to ask IDOT whether it would be here or there. Mr. Coulter felt that it being further away and on a Village side street, IDOT would consider it.

President Wallace stated that if the existing configuration is approved by DuPage County including a stoplight somewhere in the middle, it would allow people a safe way to exit or if they feel comfortable and it is not peak hours, they can exit out the back. On Randall Road at Lake-in-the-Hills, there are a lot of stoplights – the retailers want that exposure. They don't want people zooming past at 45 mph; they want people to slow down and stop.

Chairman Camerer asked what the next step would be.

J. Plonczynski explained that IDOT would like the Village's feedback within 90 days.

Chairman Camerer asked what has to be done to pursue getting a stoplight.

J. Plonczynski responded that the Village would have to ask in a letter to John Fortman, IDOT District One Engineer. Mr. Fortman would have to okay it to be included in Phase 1 or at least studied and put into the Phase 2 design engineering.

There being no further comments or questions, Chairman Camerer stated that the item will be placed on an upcoming agenda for further discussion with the Village's traffic consultant.

President Wallace entertained a motion to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Moved by Trustee Shipman
Seconded by Trustee Martin

Motion carried.

President Wallace adjourned the Committee of the Whole meeting at 8:08 p.m.