

**PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND ACCESS TASK FORCE
MEETING #7 – MEETING MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, October 1, 2014

Time: 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Location: Basement Conference Room – Larcom City Hall

Attendees:

Task Force Members Present, 8: Vivienne Armentrout; Scott Campbell; Kenneth Clark; Neal Elyakin ; Linda Diane Feldt; Owen Jansson; Anthony Pinnell; Sarah Pressprich Gryniewicz; Jim Rees;

Public Present: Sabra Briere; Larry Deck; Kathy Griswold; Seth Peterson; refer to Attachment B for sign-in sheet

City Staff Present, 3: Robert Kellar, Connie Pulcipher, Lawrence Schroeder

Consultant Present (The Greenway Collaborative), 2: Norman Cox and Carolyn Prudhomme

Re: Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force Meeting

Meeting Called to Order: 5:00pm

1. Introductions.
2. Changes to agenda: None, unanimously approved
3. Public Commentary: See #10 below
4. Approval of Meeting 6 Discussion/Minutes - approved
5. Approve amendments to Pedestrian Safety and Access Plan Annotated Outline - approved
6. Paul Tinkerhess – presentation on SnowBuddy program. Snowbuddy.org, snowbuddy on Facebook, Waterhill neighborhood on nextdoor.com
7. This meeting was primarily a discussion with Ann Arbor staff of ordinance enforcement of the snow clearing ordinance.
8. This part of the meeting was largely a discussion of Ann Arbor's snow clearing ordinance as compared to others that Task Force members had compiled.
9. J. Rees moved that the Task Force recommend to Council that Ann Arbor change its ordinance wording as proposed by K. Clark in email on the Task Force Group dated 9/28. K. Clark seconded. Due to time constraints, K. Clark moved to postpone the discussion until the next Task Force meeting. V. Armentrout seconded. The motion was approved. L. D. Felt recommended that a committee be formed to consider the wording to be proposed to Council. There was general agreement, and T. Pinnell, V. Armentrout, S. Pressprich Gryniewicz, and K. Clark agreed to comprise the committee.

10. Public Commentary:

1. Libby Hunter who lives in Ann Arbor near a school. She reported a problem with the school sidewalk. Two staff members became fairly livid with her and pointed out that the staff has shrunk considerably. That's the same staff that handles snow clearing.
2. Kathy Griswold. Our ordinances regarding pedestrian transportation are all over the code, they cover areas based on the type of problem, but that makes them dispersed. She'd like them moved to a common location. Specifically, consistency in the ordinance for maintaining line of sight between pedestrians and motorists is a concern.
3. Seth Petersen, 7th. Is there anything the City can do with regard to how they plow? Could they straighten the blade as they go by a sidewalk ramp or crosswalk? That might be a way to reduce the snow getting plowed into ramps.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm. Minutes taken by Sec. Clark

[Secretary note: for all of these meetings there will be two records of the meeting. These minutes are a record of official actions taken and public commentary. Ann Arbor City staff and/or the consultant on this project, the Greenway Collaborative, will produce a second record of the discussion points of the meeting, with more detail. Both of these records will be available on the Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force Google Drive repository, available through the City of Ann Arbor website at www.a2gov.org/departments/systems-planning/Transportation/Pages/Pedestrian-Safety-and-Access-Task-Force.aspx]

Attachment A: Meeting #7 Discussion Summary

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND ACCESS TASK FORCE MEETING #7 - DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Note: This is not a direct transcription of the meeting discussion. The following summary has been developed from notes taken during the meeting; comments are paraphrased. Where staff and consultants provided information and responses they are shown in italics.

- Approval of Agenda:
 - Unanimous approval of agenda. (Attachment C)
- Approval of Meeting # 4 Minutes and Discussion Summary:
 - There is confusion on why the word “furniture” was used on page seven. *(Staff follow-up: The term “furniture” was used in relationship to the “furniture zone” located between the walkway area and curb.)*
 - Unanimous approval.
- Approval of Amendments to the Pedestrian Safety and Access Plan Annotated Outline:
 - Unanimous approval.
- Local Winter Maintenance Example Program: SnowBuddy
 - Paul Tinkerhess gave a brief presentation on the SnowBuddy program. Below are some of P. Tinkerhess’s key points from that discussion:
 - Snow removal is important for mobility.
 - SnowBuddy is a nonprofit sidewalk snow removal service that is modeled after a public radio station. It provides service to free to everyone in the designated area and is supported by donations.
 - About 12 miles of sidewalk have been identified in the Water Hill neighborhood to be the pilot area for this program.
 - It is estimated that it would cost less than \$1 per household per snowfall to clear the sidewalks for labor if that method was used.
 - High quality snow removal machinery would be bought or leased for snow clearing.
 - Volunteers would take turns clearing sidewalks.
 - The program would be supported by donations from whoever wants to contribute.
 - More information is available at www.snowbuddy.org and there is a Facebook account.
 - The goal of the SnowBuddy program is to demonstrate that this type of program is possible and that the City is in the best position to maintain these types of pedestrian transportation corridors though taxes since they have the insurance, machinery, technical experience and authority.
 - SnowBuddy would welcome any help in evaluating the program.

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- This is not envisioned to be a City wide program, but other neighborhoods could model after this program.
- Are sidewalks on city property or an easement through private property? *Generally speaking, in most areas the City owns about 15' in from the curb, which includes the width of the sidewalk and the lawn extension. In some neighborhoods, the property owner owns to the middle of the street and the City has an easement.*
- Winter Maintenance Brainstorming Session
 - *In the past the city has provide information though printed materials, however we may now be at a point where we need to change how information is distributed because the audience is very different from what it used to be. A lot people no longer pay attention to printed materials.*
 - *General communication materials that the city uses includes:*
 - *Waste Watchers and Water Matters mailed to homes*
 - *General fliers available at City Hall and periodically mailed to homes*
 - *Social Media and City Website*
 - *CTN*
 - *MLive*
 - *You cannot reach everyone through mailers. Around 72,000 people a day commute to Ann Arbor to work. This is a difficult demographic to reach.*
 - *Winter Maintenance ad goes out in Ann Arbor Observer every year. This ad is getting a complete make-over this year. It will explain sidewalk winter maintenance responsibility of property owners and how the city plows the streets.*
 - *Digital outreach regarding winter maintenance is ramped up this time of year.*
 - *Waste Watchers mailer (50,000 homes) will include information on where to place waste bins during the winter weather.*
 - *Michigan Daily and MLive will be notified of winter maintenance issues and responsibilities.*
 - *What happens when someone reports a winter maintenance complaint to Community Standards? When a Community Standard Officer responds to a complaint, they will give notices to all properties on the block that are also in violation. Community Standards then does a follow-up 24 hour later (as long as another snow fall hasn't occurred). This year Community Standards Officers will be proactive in snow removal violations and give out notices without a complaint being filed. In general, we see a lot of action and compliance once the notice is posted.*
 - *Does the 24 hour follow-up occur after a complaint is made, or after a notification is given for a snow removal violation? 24 hours after the notification is posted.*
 - *Why would a new snow fall negate the violation? It is unfair to people who shovel and then the snow falls afterward. Makes it difficult to prove if the walk was shoveled or not.*
 - *Is there a civil infraction included with the fine when someone is given a sidewalk snow removal notice? A civil infraction, just like a traffic speeding ticket, is given*

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- along with a fine. The fine starts at a \$150 and goes up for repeat offenders. An additional clean-up cost and fee is separate from this amount.*
- *If there is a cost to removing the snow, can the judges remove that fee as well? No, the ticket is either dismissed or lowered.*
 - *A better description of the cost of the fine and snow removal should be noted on the snow removal notice, so people have a better idea of what the cost to them is for not clearing the snow. The communications office worked with the police department to reword tickets that were issues during the 26 weeks to safety program where citations were issued to drivers for not stopping for pedestrians. The communications office could do something similar with the snow removal notice.*
 - *In a winter like last winter, to what extent do we expect the homeowners to really clear that much snow and to what extent do we expect pedestrians to put up with that much un-cleared snow? Is there a point that we would say, it snowed so much that pedestrians are going to have to deal with more snow than they would like? There are also issues when we run out of salt for the ice.*
 - *When citations are brought to court, are extenuating circumstances, such as a shortage of salt, taken into consideration by the Judge? The officer testifies first and presents his evidence and then the property owner testifies and may include the shortage of salt or the snow being packed down. People have gotten complacent with the easy winters we have had in the past and have not cleared the snow right away, which leads to it becoming compacted. Last winter, a lot of the people fell behind and it became almost impossible to dig out. Last winter was an anomaly.*
 - *There is an education opportunity to notify property owners to clear their walks soon after the snowfall or it may become compacted, especially in student areas where there are a lot of pedestrians.*
 - *How are hardship cases handled and do you give them any guidance or information on assistance? If the property owner calls the number and provides a description of the hardship they may be granted an extension but no forgiveness. Owners are notified of the salt and sand mixture provided by the City.*
 - *Can Community Standards file complaints against the Ann Arbor Public Schools and Federal Buildings, etc.? Yes, we usually call the school to notify. People should notify Community Standards regarding any property in the City.*
 - *In the past, some schools do not clear their walks until there is a complaint. There have been a number of issues that have come up recently and the City is currently working on improving their communications with the schools.*
 - *Using A2 Fix It, is there anything in the near-term that this committee would like to use or promote using for this upcoming winter? One benefit of A2 Fix It is you can see other people's posts.*
 - *A2 Fix It uses geocoding to locate the user and the user can see if the issue has already been reported. Voting on A2 Fix It was part of the developer's software but is not taken into consideration.*

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- In Salt Lake City and Cambridge, they provide footnotes on the snow removal notices that remind property owners that the costs and fines do not include lawsuits which one would be subject to if someone falls on their property.
- In Chicago, “the owner, occupant, tenant, and resident” is responsible for snow removal. In Ann Arbor, it is “the owner”.
- In Madison, courts are not involved at all. If you are notified and do not clear your sidewalk, the City contracts someone to clean it up and the property owner is fined and billed for the snow removal service. There is no right of appeal.
- In Madison, the website is much more informative and friendly in regards to winter snow maintenance. The message on the website is much more precise and clear on what your responsibility is.
- *From a communications standpoint, a simpler ordinance regarding snow removal would be easier to communicate with the public.*
- In Madison, you can register on their website to get notified when sidewalks need to get cleared.
- How will A2 Fix It change winter maintenance issues? *A2 Fix It is for non-emergency complaints only. It is a new tool and is being reviewed. The tool is currently under a soft launch. City staff is considering providing seasonal issues to address winter maintenance.*
- Will the City respond to A2 Fix It complaints regarding winter maintenance the same way they responded to snow complaints in the past? *A2 Fix It now makes all complaints public. That is a cultural change in itself.*
- I never heard of A2 Fix It prior to these meeting, it seems that the City needs to push the information out more. *There has not been a big push for A2 Fix It as it is still in the soft launch phase. Once the bugs are worked out there will be a hard launch with a more significant push, most likely late winter or spring.*
- How many officers does Community Standards have on patrol in the winter? *Past assignments have been 2 or 3 officers after a snow storm. There are 11 officers and not all of them are trained in Community Standards. Community Standard Officers are not Police Officers.*
- Last winter, there were 90 occurrences where snow fell within 24 hours of each other, making it difficult to enforce the current ordinance. Is that true? *Yes, we were about to get to a dozen or so properties. That information is included in the Winter Maintenance Brief.*
- Many times winter maintenance issues are located at ramps and intersections. In Cambridge, MA there is budgeting for the bobcats to follow the snow plows and clear out ramps at intersections.
- On A2 Fix It, what happens when someone reports the mound of snow that is actually in the street blocking the crosswalk? *There is a loophole. The adjacent property owner is only responsible up to the street. A lot of neighborhoods across the city have that issue. There are small trucks with plows to clear cul-de-sacs, but here is not enough man power to clean every crosswalk.*
- *The City does not contract out snow plows.*

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- There are large parts of City that include homeowner associations. Maybe those groups could solicit volunteers to adopt and intersection or road crossing for snow clearance.
- Homeowner associations have a set of rule they follow and may have dues or boards of directors. Most of the City has neighborhood associations where someone registers at City Hall to represent the neighborhood. Many times the responsibly party listed become outdated or incorrect because people move away.
- The City is responsible for clearing the street, so why isn't the City clearing the entire street? It is not the responsibility of the property owner. We need to make sure the City takes up its responsibility and figures out a way to clear the entire street. How is that going to happen citywide?
- Snow and Ice Removal Ordinance:
 - The 24 hour loophole for snow removal in the ordinance is not beneficially to pedestrians, especially when it occurs day after day. City staff is also has a difficult time enforcing snow remove due to this loophole.
 - To address the loophole, similar to Madison, Wisconsin, a minor change to the ordinance is proposed; the trigger is that there is greater than an inch of ice or snow on the sidewalk regardless of whether a snow fall occurs with 24 hours.
 - *Council Member S. Briere noted that a council member can bring forward a change at any point and offered to put that put ordinance language in front of council in time for the October Meeting.*
 - The City ordinance currently does not have any language to prevent snow from being dumped onto sidewalks or into road. A lot of other communities have this language. *Field services went after a private contractor plowing snow into the street last year.*
 - A five year phased implementation of a public/private partnership was also proposed. The City's responsibility would be to solicit bids for snow clearance contracts. The bid number would be used to set fines, and eventually used for private contractors to clear large areas.
 - In Cambridge, MA they had the same issues of not having enough city staff to clear all of the areas near intersections and crosswalks, which lead them to a private/public program where they hire contractors for snow removal.
 - Does the Task Force want to move forward with providing an ordinance update for the upcoming council meeting? This would be a simple short-term modification that would make is easier for Community Standards to enforce snow removal.
 - J. Rees made a formal motion to send Ken's proposal from the September 3rd email as a recommendation to council for the October meeting as it was presented. The recommendation doesn't have to be refined as there will be some wordsmithing and debate that will occur after we send the recommendation.

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- Clarification of snow removal at bus stops needs to be addressed as well.
- Whether it is include a public or private sidewalk should be looked at.
- Does this address the curb ramp problem? *No, that is an item that could be looked at in long term ordinance recommendations.*
- As a procedural issue, if are going to recommend something that changes the ordinance, it deserves some deliberation before and we haven't had a chance to review the language. Could we do that as an email discussion and what is our time frame? *Due to the Open Meeting Act the Task Force cannot deliberate through email.*
- *From a communications standpoint this would be difficult due to the last minute change. With the available resources it is difficult to communicate changes in a policy, such as print timelines, and the amount of time it takes for the information to reach everyone.*
- It should have been moved as an item on the agenda and we do not have a copy in front of us to review. We would be making an ordinance change based on an information communication. We need to do this in a procedural way and haste is not a benefit.
- *There are trade-offs, if you choose to do this correctly it leads into the next meeting and then we have to put off other issues that need to be discussed as well. It takes time to make ordinance changes and we have to careful not to make decisions between meetings.*
- We need to remain flexible.
- K. Clark moved that we table this discussion to next meeting; J. Rees was opposed.
- A subcommittee will be created to prepare language and a proposal to the Task Force for November's meeting. The subcommittee includes the following members; V. Armentrout, K. Clark, A. Pinnell, S. Pressprich Gryniewicz.
- During the brainstorming session, the following near term and long term ideas for winter maintenance were listed:
 - Near Term Ideas
 - Refrigerator magnets sent out in City mailings that provide phone numbers for complaints.
 - Clarify the cost of fines for noncompliance on the Sidewalk Snow Removal Notice.
 - Clarify to public that citizens call Community Standards about Ann Arbor Public Schools and University of Michigan snow violations.
 - Educated public to "keep up" with snow removal – if you fall behind, the snow becomes compacted and difficult to remove.
 - Seek volunteers from homeowner and neighborhood associations to clear ramps.
 - See if there are any near-term plowing techniques that the City can change to reduce snow piles along the curb, especially near curb ramps.

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- Recommend Council to make simple changes to ordinance that can take effect this winter to eliminate the 24-hour snow removal loop-hole, which will help Community Standards enforcement.

Long Term Ideas

- Phased five year ordinance change that includes public/private partnerships.
 - Explore simplification of snow removal language, similar to Madison, Wisconsin.
 - Minimize timeframe between snow and time of notification.
 - Clarify to property owner's possibility of lawsuit if someone is injured on their sidewalk.
 - Evaluate Cambridge, Massachusetts techniques for coordinating removal of snow furrows left on curb ramps after snow plows come through.
- **The next meeting will focus on crosswalks/crossing the road. A reminder will be sent out to the Task Force to review the Crosswalk Brief provided in the agenda packet and provide any additional questions they have on crosswalks. The Task Force will have until the EOB on October 10th to email their questions to C. Prudhomme via Google Drive.**
 - **It was clarified that the next Task Force meeting is on Wednesday, November 5th.**

Attachment B: Sign-in Sheet



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
Public Services Area/Systems Planning
301 E. Huron Street
P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107

Web: www.a2gov.org/pedsafety

**SIGN-IN SHEET - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE
TASK FORCE MEETING #7**

Date: Wednesday, October 1, 2014

Time: 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Location: Basement Conference Room - Larcom City Hall (301 E Huron Street)

NAME

1. Larry Deck
2. Sabra Bore
3. Kathy Griswold
4. SETH PETERSON
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Attachment C: Approved Agenda



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
Public Services Area/Systems Planning
301 E. Huron Street
P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107

Web: www.a2gov.org/pedsafety

APPROVED AGENDA - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE
TASK FORCE MEETING #7

Date: Wednesday, October 1, 2014

Time: 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Location: ***BASEMENT CONFERENCE ROOM – LARCOM CITY HALL (301 E HURON STREET)***

Chair: Linda Diane Feldt

Secretary: Ken Clark

1. Introductions 5 – 5:05 pm
2. Approval of Agenda 5:05 – 5:10 pm
3. Public Commentary (3 minutes/speaker, limit three speakers) 5:10 – 5:20 pm
4. Approval of Meeting #6 Discussion Summary 5:20 – 5:25 pm
5. Approve amendments to Pedestrian Safety and Access Plan Annotated Outline 5:25 – 5:35 pm
6. Local Winter Maintenance Example Program 5:35 – 5:45 pm
 - a) Snow Buddy Presentation by Paul Tinkerhess
7. Winter Maintenance Near-term Action Items 5:45 – 6:15 pm
 - a) Snow Buddy Evaluation Options
 - b) Enforcement of Existing Ordinance Through A2 Fix It Promotion
 - c) Education & Outreach Brainstorming Session
8. Winter Maintenance Long Term Policy Discussion 6:15 – 6:40 pm
 - a) Issues with Existing Ordinance
 - b) Model Ordinances from Other Communities
 - c) Recommended Ordinance Modifications
 - d) Prioritization
9. Next Steps 6:40 – 6:50 pm
 - a) Draft Outline Agendas and Work Plan
 - b) Upcoming Public Engagement
 - c) Confirm Attendance for Next Meeting
 - d) Crosswalk Issues and Resources Brief addressed at November Meeting
10. Public Commentary (3 minutes/speaker)