

Wednesday, August 23, 2023
Special Workshop meeting for Albany Avenue Projects Public Workshop #2
Held at Kinderhook Fire Department

Minutes

Present: Mayor Mike Abrams	Trustees: Dorene Weir James Mark Browne Susan Patterson Quinn Murphy - absent
<u>Participants</u> HVEA: Jack Gorton, Brendan Fitzgerald Tighe & Bond: Dan Valentine (also a village resident) <u>Attendees:</u> Grace Van Moritz, Craig Morrison, Daniel Valentine, Renee Shur, Laurel Nicholson-Browne, Sabine & Bill Murphy, Astrid Montagano & Bevis Zotaj, Michael Suzi & Sean Sawyer, James Dunham, Jerry Callahan, John Piddock, Wendy Pulver, Joe Wildermuth, Malcom Bird, Richard Phillips, Phil Giltner, Alexandra Anderson, Emily Heins, Tina Lang and firefighters	

Mayor Abrams opened the informational meeting at 7:07 pm with Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor reiterated accomplishments thus far and shared ongoing agenda. Mentioned the water mains at Albany Ave. and William Street were installed about 1920. In the early 1980's conversations began about replacing those watermains, and in the mid 2000's former Mayor Jim Dunham began work on the preliminary designs for watermain replacements. Recently the board members re-looked at the problem with the biggest concern being failure. It's a closed loop water system meaning if a portion breaks it impacts the entire village and emergency replacement is expensive. The village is getting very detailed feedback from residents regarding their displeasure of the condition of Albany Ave. sidewalks, drainage, etc. so they made it a priority to replace the watermain and improve the roads. The challenge is the costs of completing the projects including watermain replacement, repaving, drainage, sidewalks, is estimated at \$3.5m. Currently taxing village residents \$380,000 per year. We couldn't get Albany Ave. done without substantially raising taxes which the village did not want to do so they went after grant money. For consideration, \$2.5m is needed for the William St. watermain and sidewalks and there's a need to save for future generations. The Village aggressively applied for federal and state grants and received two big ones, one TAP grant of \$1.8m for Albany Ave. to repave and improve sidewalks, install drainage, and improve pedestrian and bike pathways from trail to downtown area of village. Also received \$2.25m NYForward revitalization grant for infrastructure. Requesting from the state that \$400,000 of that money goes toward helping to pay for Albany Ave., through the local planning committee, with state approval. Still have \$1.2m to pay for with watermain on Albany Ave. We're applying for water infrastructure grant and talking to state about a revolving fund long term loan which is backed by the state to help pay, instead of a 15 year bond over maybe 30-40 years to reduce monthly

payment. Last few years received over \$4m in grant money, (that's 10 years' worth of taxes), these grants have time limits associated with them or the state or federal government can pull back funding, so we need to break ground on Albany Ave. by end of next year. Upon resident feedback the village slowed down process so that people are adequately informed, delayed this meeting to allow folks time to understand and read what's going on via website. On 6/28/23 they conducted Albany Ave. public workshop meeting #1 with option 1 prevailing. Hudson Valley Engineering Associates will develop traffic calming and safety measures into this preliminary design, which we see here tonight, conceptually keeping Albany Avenue the same as it is right now. It should be stated that there were a minority of residents concerned about bicycle safety. Trustees viewed preliminary updates proposed for option 1. These refinements should address some of the concerns by residents, many of concerns raised may not be addressed until we receive funding for preliminary design, with feedback by DOT, DEC, and NYS Parks and Recreation. The Village of Kinderhook Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed portions and recommended improvements. They recommend a site survey be conducted by NYS Historic Preservation and a report produced for review. NYS Parks and Recreation Director Dan McKay has suggested we use this approach. Village agrees and hopes this can be done over next few months.

Trustee Mark Browne will proceed, and the board will then discuss.

Trustee Browne went over first two agenda items. Found an online toolkit for helping understand the design process, which he shared with everyone and posted on the website. Mentioned three phases, one was scoping which was done Aug. 22nd. With initial project submitted, project management plan, smart growth tool, and a complete streets checklist then fully executed agreement goes to DOT. Sent RFQ out to 15 firms, validated by DOT, then negotiated with one firm, and HVEA was awarded the contract and statement of work. HVEA came online in 2022, has addressed what's needed for preliminary design and now advocating submission of preliminary design to DOT, who sends portions to different agencies, eg. to NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and NYS DEC, which has to happen by September for feedback to start detailed design for final design process.

Project Schedule and Future Workshop Meetings in October and November 2023. Showed we're on step 10 of schedule handout, steps 11 – 15 is where we're trying to go to do final design. Indicated step 12 is broken down to 5 steps, and the village is willing to have workgroup meetings in October, November and December to go over these concerns, eg. trees and landscaping, then to be turned over to HVEA for detailed design. Will hold special meeting to show to residents. Also, will hold special meetings on speed reduction and bicycle and pedestrian safety, another for historic preservation update, and an additional meeting as there are concerns about signs and street markings. In early December will have more detail about watermain coordination. Breaking ground by April 2024 is the goal.

HVEA presentation of preferred preliminary option 1.

Last public meeting they presented alternatives and gathered feedback from the community and learned that residents like the character of Albany Ave. The overall objective is to maintain the character, upgrade the sidewalks (ADA compliant), keep on street parking, maintain space for large agricultural vehicles and control vehicle speed. Looking at different ways to contract it. Has refined the design and starts with looking at existing condition of roadway. HVEA determined the road has 3 main characters, 1) travel lane, 2) shared shoulder space, and 3) on street parking. Although not delineated, cars park close to curb line to get away from the travel lane and provide an area for doors to swing open without getting into oncoming traffic, an important design consideration. Part of this project is to formalize the roadway, identify a 10 foot wide travel lane, 3 foot shoulder, and 7 foot wide parking lane. When they install formal curb lines, they're able to fit section in for most of the corridor. This maintains character, increases opportunity for room for bikes, accommodates door swing, and provides excess width for agricultural equipment. The identified goal is to maintain as much on street parking as possible, however due to reduction of width as you move north through the corridor, there are areas for on street parking on only one side.

22 feet is the design criteria used to get a car parked against curb line, a realistic approach to how much space is there. The paving on Albany Ave. a couple years ago more formalized the parking areas especially on the north end by Sunset, that's the area they're seeing a big hit on parking from Railroad (not Sunset) is the area that's tight. Their observations show that parking demand is less in that direction, but there's still a 50-60 space range of how many can fit on Albany Ave. They've done counts on different days with consistently seeing 20 cars parked on Albany Ave. mostly by residents. This scenario is still allowing plenty of parking. Installation of a curb and making sidewalks more consistently 5 feet everywhere impacts the corridor, and maintaining green buffer space for utilities, snow storage, and having green space to sidewalks allows more comfort for users.

Regarding vehicle speed concerns, HVEA showed center median island, a physical obstruction 4 inches high, installed in the center of the roadway forcing vehicles to slow down, change the direction of their travel so vehicles would navigate around. It's a proven tool for reducing speeds. Found them very effective as something present in the road draws attention and slowing down. It's a subtle approach using a traversable island, with a wedge curb up to it that agricultural equipment could drive over it, it's plowable, also provides safe area for pedestrians to stand in center of roadway to cross one lane at a time. The thought is to install approximately center of roadway between Sunset and Chatham St., located there to fit between driveways, and have one at AHET crossing. Some feedback received was about the raised intersection there now creates excess noise and need of an effective replacement to control vehicle speeds. This creates a gateway to come into the village, garner attention and slow down traffic. There are other tools for traffic calming, eg. curb bumpouts, to narrow road down, but this is generally more effective. And on street parking reduces the effectiveness of bumpouts. These would be visible down Albany Ave. which draws attention. (Median island) location not fixed in stone, could do one or two, but would be a good option for this road for traffic calming.

Resident Sabine Murphy mentions it appears the island is right in front of her house, and she couldn't park in front of her house. Has done own studies for speeders, the only way to stop is ticketing them. This lessens value of her property having an island in front and not being able to park in front of house which usually has 2–3 cars in the street due to the challenging driveway. HVEA will use judgment in placement of islands between driveways. Sabine mentioned 4 cars can park in front of her house now.

Resident Sean Sawyer asks if people don't have spots, can they reserve them? Sabine Murphy replied she's not going to take a neighbors' spot.

HVEA has done parking surveys, identified 20 cars. The residents know who parks where. Sabine Murphy mentioned it's challenging to get into her driveway. This is taking away parking in front of her house.

HVEA states it would be great information to get from residents - who parks in front of their house on Albany Ave. on a daily basis. They don't necessarily know whose cars they are, visitors or residents. HVEA mentions this is a concept of ways to calm traffic, and the location could be adjusted if so warranted.

Sabine Murphy hasn't complained about speed. Her son sat outside for 1 week all day long and he can tell you who it is. It's closer to the light. She recommends putting island there.

Speeding is pretty bad per Resident Phil Giltner.

Trustee Browne mentioned that radar signs show 15% are speeding between 40-55 mph. The village is trying to mediate with the Sheriff and ticketing.

Resident Malcolm Bird states at a considerable cost to residents.

Firefighter asks for pictures or locations where HVEA has installed this in middle of street? To him it's a nightmare for folks coming down street and hit parked cars, there's not a lot of room. HVEA can share installation information. Mentions there's options where it could be flush and not actually raised. Firefighter mentions the circle at Routes 9 & 9H where people run over curb and take out the trees. HVEA looking at the concept of different purposes, coming into village trying to slow people down as they enter village at trail crossing. Benefit there may be different than at the other stretch.

Grace Van Moritz asked about different traffic calming. HVEA responded most traffic calming would include the appearance of narrow road, could just do pavement markings, trade off with aesthetics, and visual contrast. Most effective are things that actually make it look like road is narrower, to slow down, eg. modern roundabouts have an island, making you slow down as it changes geometry of road.

Resident Dr. Murphy – 28 Albany Ave. asks is there a couple examples to go to and visit? HVEA will research around here and get information back. This process submitting preliminary design to DOT, have discussion to look to incorporate traffic calming measures, can do something different down the line.

Resident Astrid Montagano – project from trail to village, if driving north, cars from Albany Ave. once they pass trail will start going fast creating an uneven balance, are we prepared for excess speeding? Grace Van Moritz states its already an issue, no one's coming that way from village, bikers are headed to the village, it's pretty minimal, but they do speed. Sean Sawyer mentions traffic speed changes to 55 mph there.

Resident Malcolm Bird states when passing crossing area for bicycles heading north, he slows down and is very aware of police presence in area. Not there every day but he looks for it every day as that area lends itself to higher speeds. Feels something in middle of road to slow traffic will take so much away from some residents on the street that it's not a good tradeoff.

HVEA relays that if we just had something where trail crosses, (doesn't want this to dominate discussions as just one aspect), DOT may not have considerable interest in how it's done. Could be one area, two or none. Traffic calming was brought up as issue or concern and they're trying to show ways it could be done but could show different methods. Could focus where trail crossing is and that could be enough.

Sean Sawyer – you've got Mills Park, could sacrifice parking there, although some park there for the trail.

HVEA said what they're showing happening at Sunset doesn't impact any parking. People park at trail. HVEA says people are parking on shoulder and grass.

Trustee Mark Browne responds that since we've put trail in, we've been indicating to people they'd be better off parking at Rothermel, we put things on windshields, and we'd like to keep Mills Park the way it is. He doesn't see benefit of putting parking there.

Resident Alex Anderson lives on corner of Albany Ave. and Sunset and sees people park directly under a no parking sign every day. You have interesting corner, encouraging scooters, Segways even if there are places to park closer, they'll still park on the grass, even with the signs. You're not slowing down trucks here, if there's a median and they don't like it they'll run over it, not sure there's a solution but if you did take away parking, they'll find another place to park. Per HVEA it's an education process, letting people know where to park for the trail.

Resident Phil Giltner's house is by trail, he definitively doesn't want parking space in front of his house. HVEA is not indicating Mills Park will be a parking space. Phil Giltner mentions that since the trail opened people park in his living room. HVEA states if there's an area to prevent parking in front of a house, they could move curb line out to prevent parking. Phil states it would be marvelous to reduce available parking spaces, that we don't need parking for 50 cars.

Grace Van Moritz states there's space for 50 cars, understands residents park in front of their house, asks is it a privilege or expectation, does it increase home value, or just a convenience? As she parks in her driveway, trying to figure out what's the most important, what matters most? Is it parking, speed, or bike trail? Not hearing what's most important? Loves Kinderhook, just not hearing what's most important, just character.

HVEA is mostly talking about the cross section of the road. Mentions the big voice heard at last meeting to keep it similar. Just showing a cross section of road, parking, a relatively narrow shoulder and 10 foot travel lane. Need to get consensus from the village in order to move to the next step, the details they can continue to work on. When we submit to DOT, we have to get acceptance for the criteria used, which is going to be travel lane, shoulder, parking lane, and sidewalk which we're trying to keep consistent and standard minimum of 5 feet. Good to get feedback on traffic speeds and calming. Trustee Browne will create other discussion groups to review those issues. Does anyone have comments about cross section of road? HVEA showed wide shoulders, shared us trail one side, at the last meeting...

Resident Emily Heins asks about the expectation for bikes in this design? HVEA responds it's going to be a shared roadway. Will you have signage for shared roads both sides of trail? Yes. Is there going to be painting in lanes? No. As a cyclist asks is there no designated space for bikes? Right, it's going to be a shared roadway. HVEA is trying to balance concerns of community. Caveat though increasing safety for cyclists is not part of this plan? Per HVEA, part of reason to institute traffic calming measures is to improve bicycle safety, making road consistent width, right now parking's a little haphazard. Signage there's bikers there, presence of trail, really making trail stand out for awareness. What's proposed now does not have a dedicated bike lane down Albany Ave. That would be another level, more impact on parking. Trying to find right balance, with pedestrian use, bicycle use.

Malcolm Bird asks is parking on street, more or less in front of your house, a convenience, a right, or a privilege? Folks assume when they moved there that they can park in front of their house. With this design nobody would be able to park in places traditionally available. Jack personally thinks it's a privilege but will take his comments back with them.

Sabine Murphy states she can't park two extra cars in her driveway. HVEA asks for feedback on which residents absolutely use street parking.

Joe Wildermuth states at the last meeting folks on Albany Ave. said speeding was the main consideration, and also overwhelmingly that option 1 is what they wanted. This is a tremendous opportunity for the village to redo the watermains and streets. Albany Ave. is one of the few streets where people can park. He's not a resident of Albany Ave. Trying to accommodate, look at the whole, address major concerns, understands option 1, few details to manage, and a little parochial to try to work out to everyone's satisfaction.

Alex Anderson relayed the historic community character is very fragile and important. She watches bikers go where they want, on Albany Ave., Sunset and the trail and no one pays

attention to signs. They're out of community character, they're urban, loud, fluorescent green, everything we do to preserve rural character is essential, that's why people want to be here. Need stop signs but not every few feet. Best thing we can do is enforce speed limit, need traffic tickets as even farm trucks speed, that's part of our world. Regulation is not going to change it.

HVEA states one of the reasons to show center island traffic calming feature is it's physical, not a sign to modify behavior. With crosswalks the intention is to make brick paver texture contrast which stays in character with a historic village. Sabine Murphy comments classic white stripes is enough, it doesn't have to be colored. HVEA clarified it's not colored but a brick paver.

Malcolm Bird asks what about present hump in road? Still like this but take hump out for median island. HVEA states if something like this, a median island, is chosen for final design, we would take the hump out.

Resident John Piddock questions if thought's been given to wintertime and snow and ice? What about those issues with 8-12 inch snow pushed out in road, and you can't park in street? What about those issues with the narrower road in wintertime?

HVEA trying to keep buffer between curb line and sidewalk for snow storage. Depending on how much snow you get there may be times parking is impacted. We don't want sidewalk right behind curb line. Village DOT? Per Mayor the DPW needs to look at it, part of the issue with handling snow removal is efficiency, we've hired another part-time person, we've got another dump truck to ideally move snow in a timelier manner.

Dr. Bill Murphy states these islands may be most controversial as they take away parking for theoretical slowing down of traffic. He doesn't want to lose parking in front of house, but speeders bother him more, that's the rub.

HVEA could consider putting (island) where trail is, where it has no impact on parking. There are ways to look at finding effective ways (traffic calming) without impacting parking. Understands Mr. Murphy's immediate concern by his house.

Trustee Browne mentions we can also baseline and measure the improvement, right that it may be hypothetical to slow down traffic, but in these guys' experience it does slow down traffic, and we have to trust the engineers. Sabine Murphy said we narrowed Hudson, and that didn't slow speeding. Trustee Murphy states there's others who disagree with that statement. The same percentage are speeding but people in that 15% are slowing down.

A firefighter asks for proposed island pictures and states it may not be bad by rail trail. HVEA will put on the website.

Tina Lang inquired about what trees are they removing? A lot of people are wondering. Trustee Browne replied there's a dedicated workshop meeting specifically for tree discussion scheduled with the status of every tree.

Per Mayor they will discuss. Based on the last meeting held, overwhelmingly people wanted option 1, parking was a big issue, speeding was a big issue, and after last meeting they heard from a number of residents stating concerns they're not doing enough for bicycle safety, but overwhelmingly people wanted option 1. Will continue to improve the safety.

Trustee Patterson stated that overwhelmingly people want option 1, but she's not satisfied we heard from non-Albany Avenue residents or the rest of the community. This might not be a decision just Albany Ave. residents should make. Has had conversations with three families who were pretty adamant about wanting a bike lane. The spirit of project is to have safe, accessible, dedicated bike lane, and some kind of access between trail and village and she doesn't see it represented in this drawing. She has listened to a lot of people, kept an open mind and is inclined to go with option B with a dedicated bike lane with parking of both sides of street. Per HVEA 8-10 feet is minimum width for shared use trail.

Trustee Weir asks does DOT have the right to make additional modifications down the road? Per HVEA we have to go to DOT who as a right to comment, and they could ask for more. We may have to justify this would be enough or do what they suggest. If presented to DOT and they accepted and approved this design, if the village wanted to change after that they could, but we may have to go back to get secondary approval from DOT. As a village it falls into funny place for what actual standards need to be, there are standards for bikes and shared lanes. We'll hear something back as DOT has pedestrian and bike coordinators in each region, and they will weigh in.

Trustee Browne states when 5 options were presented, he was an advocate for a dedicated bike lane but does recognize the majority of folks, mostly Albany Ave. residents, want parking on both sides. He begrudgingly moved to go along with what majority of people want. While we don't have a right to parking, it is nice to have parking. Thinks we can also accommodate moving crosswalk to accommodate the disturbance at Murphy house, but who will live there after Murphys? We can't accommodate everyone. An advocate of putting forward to DOT, still have to get input on environmental, submit and get feedback but if we have to change it would be painful and jeopardizes construction.

Trustee Weir is in line with Trustee Browne, who motioned to submit preferred Option 1 to DOT. Trustee Weir seconded, all voted 'Aye.' Trustee Patterson comments she is in favor, not opposed. Mayor will submit Option 1 to DOT.

Mayor motioned to adjourn, seconded by Trustee Weir, meeting adjourned 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Pulver.