Mayor’s Column

January 12, 2016

Last week an elementary school student was hit by a car on lower Masterton Road. Thankfully, the youngster only sustained minor bumps and bruises and the driver was not cited for any improper behavior. It was truly an accident.

A fortunate happy ending, the incident gave us pause and galvanized us to review pedestrian/vehicle safety in the Village, particularly near our schools.

It also presents an opportune time to review safety tips at home as well, especially with our students, and of course lead by adult example.

As a reminder, always walk on the sidewalk and if there is a gap in the sidewalk, walk facing the traffic and hug the shoulder.

As to transportation by bicycle, only riders 11 and younger may use the sidewalks, with a complete ban on bicycle and skateboard riding on the sidewalks in the business district.

If on a bicycle, ride single file in the same direction as the traffic and come to a complete stop at every street crossing.

In addition, even if it involves extra steps and time, always cross at corners or marked crosswalks.

A particularly dangerous unmarked crossing is from the library parking lot to the gym entrance of the school. There are no curb cuts or crosswalk markings by design here in an effort to discourage crossing in mid-traffic.

During school construction we made accommodations here, perhaps not wisely, because other entrances to the school building were closed. They were meant to be temporary in nature. There is a crosswalk 300 feet away with a traffic control device and not too far down the street, Theresa, our crossing guard, helps with safe passage.

When crossing look left, right and then left again before stepping into the street. If a car is parked near a crosswalk, make sure there is no driver readying to start up. Also be mindful of the many obstructed view driveways throughout the Village and never push or chase a friend anywhere near the street. Walk don’t run. This gives all drivers extra time to see you.

It is important to remember that a crosswalk is not an extension of the sidewalk. Pedestrians must exercise judgment before stepping off the curb. If choosing to cross mid-street, according to New York Stare Vehicle and Traffic Law, “every pedestrian crossing a roadway at any point other than within a marked crosswalk must yield the right of way to all vehicles upon the roadway.”

Drivers in the family are reminded that when a pedestrian is crossing in a designated crosswalk, traffic law dictates that vehicles must yield in BOTH directions.

If in a crosswalk at a traffic light, whoever has the green light, car or pedestrian, has the right of way.

The areas adjacent to all of our schools in the Village, including the nursery schools, are designated School Zones with a maximum speed of 20 m.p.h.

The area near the Bronxville School, our largest, is particularly busy during drop off and pick up times so you may want to arrange travel accordingly.

The High School and Middle School day beings at 7:50AM and ends at 2:45PM. The Elementary School day commences at 8:30AM and also finishes at 2:45PM. The approximately 20 minute period around these times brings many cars to Midland Avenue, Pondfield Road and Meadow Avenue.

The busy times in town at our eateries for student lunches are between 11AM and 11:40AM and 12:10PM to 1PM.

Speaking of the business district, we are very mindful of the numerous “crossing a double yellow line” infractions and have dramatically increased enforcement. Hundreds of tickets were issued during the holidays. It is important to note that our parking enforcement officers are not police officers and cannot stop cars for this violation.

To do our part, the Village’s police department is be especially vigilant in enforcing laws relating to speeding, cell phone usage and texting while driving, failure to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and the new State idling law. Under the provisions of the new law, all motor vehicles are prohibited from idling for more than three minutes.

We will also ensure that our crossing guards receive the most up-to-date training on safe practices.

As I write, we are also reviewing potential upgrades to the intersection of Pondfield Road and Midland Avenue including the addition of pedestrian crossing devices.

The repair and safe passage of sidewalks are the duty of the adjacent homeowners and we ask you, the residents, to help us by identifying locations in need of sidewalk repair or suggestions to make safer walking routes throughout the Village.

I know the Police Chief is meeting with several residents this week to discuss additional crosswalk markings in heavily traveled areas throughout the Village.

Any and all safety suggestions are welcomed and needed. Do not hesitate to reach out.