

# Petition launched to make hazardous intersection safe

BY TINA JOHANSSON

Special to The News-Sun

Concerned citizens who launched a petition drive this week are hopeful they got the backing they need to get a traffic light installed at a dangerous intersection in Beach Park.



McCoy

What sparked the interest spearheaded by Janice Booker of Beach Park and Julie

Gonka of Winthrop Harbor was a fatal accident at 29th Street and Green Bay Road near Kenosha Road on April 14.

North Chicago resident Orinthia McCoy, 66, died after a Chevrolet Suburban collided with her Honda Civic. McCoy, a well-respected special education instructor at the Round Lake Area School District, had just left services at Christian Faith Fellowship Church in Zion when the crash occurred.

McCoy's granddaughter Oneika Pearson who witnessed the accident from her rear-view mirror, attended the petition launch Monday night, July 8, at the Beach Park village hall. "I really do hope with her passing, that we're able to get a light on Green Bay so no one else (dies) or gets hurt. I don't want her death to be in vain," said Pearson of North Chicago.

Booker said she felt driven to do something after coming upon the fatal crash. "I stopped out of curiosity, but one woman's comments resonated within me," said Booker who couldn't quell the tragic scene she took home with her that day. "She said to me, 'What more is it going to take for them to do something with this intersection?'"

"The trauma there ... the

## LIGHT UP GREEN BAY ROAD

A Facebook page, Light up Green Bay Road, has been created and is garnering much interest. Concerned residents are asked to sign the online petition.

For more information contact Janice Booker or Julie Gonka via Facebook or send an email to [lightupgreenbayroad@yahoo.com](mailto:lightupgreenbayroad@yahoo.com).

woman who was killed had her family in a car in front of her. My daughter just got her license and I began to think. I knew something needed to be done," said Booker.

Signed petitions are to be sent to officials of the county, the state and the village after July 31, the deadline for the drive. The goal is to have a traffic signal or synchronized multiple signals at Green Bay Road, Kenosha Road and west 29th Street. The dream is a four-lane road, with traffic signals, said the women. But whatever it is, "We cannot wait," said Booker.

"We are aware of the financial straits of the state right now (Green Bay is known as IL State Route 131), but we are hoping they can do something," said Gonka. "We hope they will do some engineer-



Janice Booker of Beach Park (right) and Orinthia McCoy's granddaughter, Oneika Pearson. (PHOTO BY CHERI NEAL, ZION TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR)

ing — something quickly to address the situation. If not a traffic light right now, perhaps a round-about."

"(The petition drive) is just the beginning," said Gonka, the spunky daughter of Beach Park's late mayor Milt Jensen. "My dad was constantly working on (getting traffic lights and road widening at) Green Bay," she said.

Though the goal is to get at least 2,000 signatures, more is better, said the women. "Imagine us going into Joanne Osmond's office with 40,000 signatures. They would have to listen," Gonka said.

Green Bay is narrow in Beach Park with only one lane in each direction from Sunset north to the state line. "Wisconsin has it right," said Booker at the presentation. "And so does Waukegan (they each have four lanes)."

While there have been

past public meetings with IDOT regarding widening Green Bay, there haven't been any in several years. According to Jon Kindseth, administrative services director for Beach Park, expansion of the road is "in the planning stage," however it will likely not be started "for a few years."

Green Bay Road in Beach Park has had its share of accidents at the intersections — four fatalities since 2003, and as well as 100 other car accidents, said Kindseth. And there have been many more near-misses, said Gonka. "Tire and skid marks are all over, and people have even driven up onto the front lawn of the township office."

Jan Suthard, supervisor of Benton Township, said seniors that attend activities at the township office are often advised to take a different route home and avoid the potential dangers of getting out onto Green Bay Road.

Booker said there are many challenges for drivers of the "archaic" roadway including increased traffic; only 394 feet from Kenosha Road to 29th Street forcing abrupt turns off of 45-mph Green Bay Road; a curve to maneuver; telephone poles close to the road on both the southeast and southwest corners; as well as an obstructed view from a large commercial real estate sign jutting out into traffic.



A Chevrolet Suburban and a Honda Civic collided in a fatal accident on Green Bay Road and 29th Street in Beach Park April 14. North Chicago resident Orinthia McCoy, 66, a teacher in Round Lake died in the crash. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

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