

Minutes from the Harris Town Board
Road Work Session - Paved Roads
November 19, 2014 at 7:00pm

A work session of the Harris Town Board followed the Planning and Development meeting, held on Wednesday, November 19, 2014.

The purpose of this work session was to discuss all township roads, including, but not limited to, their current conditions, what improvements are needed, and a draft priority list for improving the roads, as well as funding options for said improvements.

In attendance were Supervisors Rosato, Key, Kortekaas, Kelley, and Ives, as well as Clerk Smith. *Absent: Treasurer Adams.* Also in attendance was Glen Hodgson – SEH Road Engineer for the township, and Dan Butterfield, Judy Myers, Marge Kelley, and Cyndy Martin (residents)

The work session was called to order at 8:17pm by Chairman Rosato, and turned over to Glen Hodgson, road engineer from SEH.

Hodgson explained that he would like to see the town board develop a 5 year plan for road maintenance, and update it each year. This would be beneficial from an engineering standpoint as well as a finance standpoint. He suggested that the county engineer – Karin Grandia – may be of some help in the board developing a 5 road plan.

A current 2014 paved road evaluation spreadsheet was given to the board by Hodgson. It included who inspected the road as well as the road length and a priority index – which is a direct result of the ratings. He noted that the lower the number, the worse condition it is – and the more traffic it has.

Discussion:

Gravel roads:

Q: Are we putting too much Class V on our gravel roads? Forest View Trail has too much gravel on it currently.

A: We just completed the first 5 year rotation for gravel roads – which worked well, but low volume roads do not lose gravel like the higher volume roads, due to low traffic. As a result, the rotation system needs to be refined a bit. For example, there are 6 roads coming up on the rotation in 2015 but Hodgson recommended that he and a supervisor inspect them before contracting for gravel to be added; there's probably roads that have had very little gravel loss and could be skipped, while other roads may need 2 inches of gravel, and some 4 inches.

Paved Roads:

Hodgson commented that the sooner the township can request paved road bids in 2015, the better price we will get. Bidding in February or March would be optimal, as contractors are 'hungrier' then to get work.

- Road Priorities suggested by Hodgson; these are roads he felt *need* to be improved in next 2-3 years:
 1. Sunny Beach Road –
A public meeting was held for this road; and may be the board's first priority. Part of the Sunny Beach Road could be overlaid (Adair to Harris Town Road), but the rest should be reclaimed per Hodgson. And the section noted above for an overlay could be deferred for 1-2-3 years, and not fall into the reclaim category as it's still in pretty decent shape. Hodgson added that the worst part of Sunny Beach Road is the Park Road to Adair; it's in very bad condition.
 2. Underwood Road - west –
Once drainage is improved, Hodgson would be comfortable doing a tight blade and overlay on Underwood West (not a reclaim). Glen recapped that the township has the legal right to return the ditch to its original cross section but a permit is needed to clean out ditch – and return it to its original condition.
 3. Birch Street and Isleview (combined) –
These roads are beyond the point of doing an overlay; they are candidates for a reclaim. Because the combined length of Birch Street and the additional area on Isleview is a little over a mile in length,

Hodgson estimated the cost to reclaim them would be approximately \$400,000 based on his estimate of \$390,000/mile for reclaim.

4. Fieldcrest –

It was noted that part of Fieldcrest is falling apart - on the south end; however, the board was not in agreement that this road was next in line for repair (it was not considered by some to be in the same 'category of need' as 1-3 above).

The BOARD AGREED with Hodgson's top 3 roads for improvement: Sunny Beach, Underwood-west, and Birch Street/Isleview.

Something to consider, suggested by Hodgson, was to only improve Underwood Road west in 2015; this would give the board time to develop a 5-year road plan and yet money would still be coming in. And they could continue talking about bonding in 2016. Supervisor Ives commented that he did not like idea of waiting a year to improve roads, as they could get that much worse – go past 'overlay' option, and end up costing twice as much to repair. Plus, interest rates may go up – as well as the cost of oil.

Crack filling the bad roads was discussed, as that is all that is wrong with some of the township roads. There is a new product that City of Grand Rapids used, which the board and Hodgson will be interested to see how the roads look in the spring.

Bonding was discussed as a way to finance the repair of all the worst roads at one time. Per Ives, the mobilization savings could possibly save enough to pay a year's interest. And interest rates are low right now.

If bonding is done, Minnesota state statues require that the township have a 5 year road plan. The board would need to determine what improvement are needed for all township roads, as well as day to day maintenance needs.

The length of the bond and the amount borrowed (bonded for), as well as the interest rate makes a difference in the amount of the payback.

The board discussed that they would need approximately \$2.3 million dollars to do the top roads noted above: Sunny Beach, Underwood-west, and Birch Street/Isleview.

Work session with the City and County:

Hodgson informed the board that Karin Grandia from Itasca County could meet with the board on Wednesday, **December 3rd**. It was also thought that Julie Kennedy, Rob Mattei, Barb Baird, and Tom Pagel from the City of Grand Rapids could also attend. A 4:00pm time was suggested, and Hodgson will confirm with Karin and the others – as well as determine a meeting location. The clerk will be notified – and advise the board once the time and location have been confirmed.

A motion was made to adjourn tonight's work session by Supervisor Key at 9:23pm. Upon a second by Supervisor Kortekaas, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Township Clerk