

Harris Town Board
ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION
with the Staff of Grand Rapids
Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 7:15 P.M.

The Harris Town Board met on Tuesday, April 28, 2009 at 7:15 p.m., at the Blandin Foundation, with the following members present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, & Larry Key, Clerk Michele Smith and Township Engineer, Julie Kennedy. Absent: Treasurer John Jokela.

Present from Grand Rapids was City Engineer, Tom Pagel. Rob Mattei, Community Development Director, was not able to attend.

The purpose of tonight's round table was to continue dialog between the township and the city staff (not the city council) on proposed road development and improvements.

Mr. Pagel informed the group that a 2.5 million dollar stimulus package had been received; it will be used in part to reconstruct part of Airport road/7th Avenue. Bids for this project will open on May 7th, 2009. Once awarded, a notice will be mailed to every resident of the Airport Road to let them know that 7th Avenue/Airport Road will be closed during construction, from the Airport to the end of the city limits, near Harris Town Hall. The County was not ready to do construction beyond the city limits, due to lack of funding, so the entire road will not be done. Pagel noted that Airport Road/7th Avenue is a county road and *not* a "state aid" highway.

When the Airport Road is closed, the detour will include Harris Town Road. With regards to construction affecting the entrance to the town hall, Mr. Pagel stated that the entrance will not be bothered. However, the effect of road construction equipment on the Airport Road was a concern of the Town Board. Due to the location of the gravel pits, it seemed likely that trucks coming from the area pits would use Airport Road to get to the construction site. However, the Airport road is not made for that type of traffic, and would be very hard on the road. In addition, the noise of the large truck traffic on the rough road would be disturbing to residents. Mr. Pagel agreed, and will request that construction contractors NOT use the Airport Road, in order to maintain the structural integrity of the road.

The group discussed that a map of the proposed construction area could be sent to the clerk as a PDF, and she could put it on the website. This would let people see the detour area as well.

Included in the project for Airport Road/7th Ave, is a center turning lane, sidewalks, streetlights, and moving the power underground. It will look like the recently reconstructed area of 7th Avenue, from the Airport to the River Road – except no round about.

Mr. Pagel stated that the project will be wrapped up by October 15, 2009. He advised that people could watch the "construction update" section of the Grand Rapids Herald Review newspaper for updates to the project.

Another project coming up for the City of Grand Rapids is the construction of 33rd street, with bidding starting tomorrow. 33rd Street is only 1/4 mile long and will be a dead end culdesac, until something south of Walmart goes in (where Menards was going to go). This road will also be constructed this summer. At the end of 33rd, a person will be able to go north on 6th Avenue SE which will connect back to 29th street.

The Golf Course Road is a county state-aid highway, and will be widened to 3 lanes (with a center turn lane) with sidewalks also added. The city is partially involved. Realigning Donovan drive to 6th Ave – with a 4 way stop...for pedestrian / school traffic will be done in 2010.

Supervisor Rosato asked what the City of Grand Rapids uses for crack fill/sealing of road cracks/holes. He liked the method and material used by the City, and wondered if it was something

the township could do? Mr. Pagel suggested that Jeff Davies would be the best person to ask about this, and perhaps he could come to a township meeting and discuss the methods used. Julie offered to talk to Mr. Davies as the City of La Prairie is also interested in their style of crack filling. Perhaps a joint effort could be considered for crack fill and striping. .

Mr. Pagel mentioned that the LaPlant Road may be redone in the next 5 years. He did not have any details to share, but thought it was recently added to the city's five year road plan.

Improvements to Mishawaka Road were discussed as this road has areas owned by both the township and the city. Pagel shared that he'd thought adding a road to divert traffic from the narrow part road area along the lake would be beneficial to both parties. The township currently has a ROW (in the Cottage Grove plat) that perhaps could be used. Everyone agreed that the township and city could work together on this project in the future. Julie will pull the related maps and work on a concept drawing with Tom Pagel.

The City of Grand Rapids will be updating their comprehensive plan in the winter of 2010 and that would be a good time for them to have a plan in place for Mishawaka Road. The Township is also due to review their comprehensive plan as well, and focus more on roads. Knowing where potential/new roads would be built would be beneficial when future plats come before the County and Township boards. This would show where a road is planned – and prevent houses or developments being built in the middle of a potential road site.

The next round table work session will take place during this fall, 2009, with a goal of a Mishawaka Road concept plan. An exact date was not set.

This round table discussion ended at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted

Michele Smith, Clerk