

**ADA TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
MINUTES
MAY 24, 2010**

Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Haga at 7:30 p.m. Members present: Supervisor Haga, Clerk Burton, Treasurer Rhoades, Trustee Westra, Trustee Smith, Trustee Sytsma. Also present: Planning Director Jim Ferro, Township Engineer Steve Groenenboom, Recording Secretary Johnson and twenty-nine community members. Members absent: Trustee Proos.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Westra, supported by Smith, to approve the agenda as presented. Yes - 6, No - 0; Motion carried.

Per the Chair's privilege, Supervisor Haga decided to address General Township Business at the end of the meeting and move directly to New Business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no Unfinished Business.

NEW BUSINESS

3 MILE ROAD HILL PAVING PROJECT

Supervisor Haga noted the project to pave a 1000' hill section of 3 Mile Road had not changed since the Township Board had previously voted it down in October 2007. There was a public hearing on the issue on March 12, 2007. As the project has not changed, and the key issues have not changed, Supervisor Haga urged the public to focus their comments on any aspects that had not been already considered or discussed. He also requested comments be limited to two minutes per person, as the Board is already familiar with the project and the related concerns. He introduced Jon Rice, Managing Director of the Kent County Road Commission, and Jerry Byrne, Kent County Road Commission Director of Maintenance and Local Construction, who would be responding to Board comments and questions after the public comment period. Supervisor Haga noted the estimate for the total cost of the project is \$135,000.00, of which \$74,250.00 is the Township's share.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR THE 3 MILE ROAD HILL PAVING PROJECT

Barb Toigo has a son that lives on Mela-Via with his family. She expressed appreciation of the Township's efforts to keep the road open and she acknowledged the natural beauty concerns. However, she stressed the safety concerns for the winter when the road is nearly impassable. The road also poses a concern for access in emergencies. Even in fair weather, the road is dangerous due to the condition of the road.

Robert Kintz, 6025 3 Mile Road, argued that beauty was important, but safety was paramount. He noted the project doesn't include the area in front of his house, but he still felt it was an essential project. The dirt road in front of his home doesn't pose the safety risk that the hill portion does. He further indicated that there has been difficulty with service trucks getting access due to the hill in the winter. He did not feel trees were the key issue, given the number of trees being planted already, and placed against the compelling safety needs.

Anna Olman, Mela-Via Lot 8, noted her family is in the process of building on the site and has been visiting the site frequently. She has changed vehicles in anticipation of future difficulties with the hill; she feels the drive is precarious. Although she values the trees, she is more concerned with the state of the road in inclement weather. The drive up the road is dangerous, but the drive down the road is even more hazardous. She also inquired if the Board has considered the net cumulative costs, both financial and environmental impact, of continuous patching, filling, and grading the dirt road compared to maintaining a paved road.

Karen Holt, 5701 3 Mile, referred to the letter she sent to the Board which indicated there is no actual evidence that 3 Mile hill is actually unsafe. She felt the primary factor that made the road unsafe was drivers not driving appropriate speeds for the conditions. She also indicated the road would be much more hazardous if it was paved, because she felt drivers would drive faster on a paved surface, regardless of appropriate speeds for conditions. She noted a petition in July of 2008 opposing the paving was signed by almost 100% of local households, including the current Township Clerk, Susan Burton. She concluded she would strongly oppose any paving that exceeds 22-24' in width, because that width would preserve wildlife habitat.

John Toigo, 3011 Mela-Via Court, shared pictures from a recent rollover accident that occurred on 3 Mile hill. He encouraged different viewpoints and commended everyone for showing up to participate in the discussion, but felt the deciding issue was that the hill was currently unsafe. There have been accidents. In addition to the road conditions, passing on the hill is also treacherous. The trees on the roadside have exposed roots and will eventually come down. He indicated the people living on the hill support the paving project for safety concerns.

Wayne Arnold, 2814 Pettis, lives at the bottom of 3 Mile hill. He believes paving will increase the driving speeds and will actually increase potential risk. He indicated that the trees growing along the roadside are actually holding back the bank and preventing erosion and are not at risk of uprooting.

Mike Homier, will shortly be moving with his wife to Ada Township in the Mela-Via subdivision. He noted the rollover accident on

that road was proof of the danger of the road. He emphasized safety could not be compromised for the public. He rejected the concern that drivers would accelerate on 1000' of pavement either driving up a blind hill or driving down to a stop sign.

Robert Ripley, 6063 3 Mile, supported the paving project. He felt the road was simply unsafe. In the last two weeks he had two separate incidents regarding the road: difficulty passing a truck and a delivery driver indicating future deliveries couldn't be made if the road deteriorated further. He also noted the gravel road maintenance was hard on the environment as the gravel slid down the hill.

BOARD COMMENT FOR THE 3 MILE ROAD HILL PAVING PROJECT

Moved by Westra, supported by Smith, to approve the work order from the Kent County Road Commission for Local Road Construction Authorization dated April 20, 2010 with a total budget estimate of \$135,000.00, with the Township's share being \$74,250.00. Jerry Byrne, Kent County Road Commission Director of Maintenance and Local Construction, indicated the paving width would be 24' from back of valley to back of valley and it will look very similar to how it currently looks. It will be wide enough to allow two cars to pass. He also noted the road would have rolled gutters and storm drains which would drain to the west underneath Pettis. He confirmed the paving would not affect the current natural beauty designation of the road. To minimize grading limits and increase safety, the grade will be adjusted. This will also minimize impact on trees. During winter, the 1000' section will have the same priority level and maintenance schedule that it currently has. The Board considered the safety aspects of the 3 Mile surface. Although paving and gravel roads have similar safety records, research shows that paving is a safer surface on a grade. Research also indicates that gravel roads are more costly to maintain on a grade. The Board discussed the 2007 project that was voted down in favor of maintenance and drainage measures, which have not subsequently addressed the problem adequately. Board members shared their recent visits to the section of 3 Mile and their viewing of the dangerous washouts in the recent rains. Clerk Burton noted she had signed the petition in 2008 opposing the project, but she has since spent more time driving that section and she now supports the paving initiative for safety concerns. The Board discussed requesting the Kent County Road Commission to install signage at the top of the hill regarding the approaching incline in addition to the existing "Stop Ahead" sign; the Kent County Road Commission representatives felt it would probably be redundant. The Board also considered the possibility of future allocation of funds for tree plantings along the section in addition to any bank stabilization vegetation that the Kent County Road Commission may plant.

Yes - 6, No - 0; Motion carried.

ADA TOWNSHIP LOCAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Jim Ferro, Planning Director, presented the local road improvement projects. The Public Works Committee worked with the Maintenance Division of the Kent County Road Commission to assemble a list of recommended road projects. The recommendations are based on individual road condition ratings by the Kent County Road Commission and a review of available funds in conjunction with costs of repairs, various treatment options, traffic volumes, traffic speeds, and relation of the roads to economic development. The lowest rated roads were driven by the Planning Director with the Maintenance Director of the Kent County Road Commission. The recommended project list does not include the 3 Mile hill paving project, but does include the Bronson Street project which the Board had earlier excluded from the budget except for the \$12,000.00 in engineering fees. **Moved by Westra to approve the recommendation by the Public Works Committee for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Road Improvement Projects with the subtraction of the Bronson Street project of \$94,000.00, and the addition of \$12,000.00 for engineering for the Bronson Street project, and the addition of \$74,250.00 for the 3 Mile hill paving project for a total of \$423,750.00. Support by Rhoades.** Jerry Byrne, Kent County Road Commission Director of Maintenance and Local Construction, indicated the surface treatments used on some of the marginal roads would not provide full life expectancy, as compared to if they were applied to roads with better condition ratings. The Board discussed potentially rating road condition of gravel roads as well as paved roads in the future. The Board also considered the importance of capturing this data in the GIS system and continuing to develop pro-active strategic planning of this nature throughout the capital improvement and budgeting process. It was also suggested a cost estimate for projects not yet recommended would have been informative. The Board discussed the timing of the Bronson Street project, which has been waiting for nearly twenty years. Supervisor Haga noted the Finance Committee will be searching for funding options for the project. **Yes - 5, No - 1; Motion carried.**

WATER AND SANITARY SEWER RATE STUDY

Steve Groenenboom from Moore & Bruggink, Township Engineers, presented the findings and recommendations from the water and sanitary sewer rate study. The overall recommendation was an increase of approximately 20% in water rates and an increase of approximately 76% in sewer rates. The rates have been very low for a long time. In the past, growth of the Township created enough new customers to offset cost increases to the system. Growth has leveled off and Grand Rapids rates continue to increase, particularly to address the Saddleback Sewer project. Ada Township water comes from the city of Grand Rapids (with the exception of the Grand Valley Water System, which is fed by wells and a water tank). Ada Township sewage is sent to the Grand Rapids water treatment plant. Therefore, Grand Rapids costs are passed onto Ada Township and make up the largest portion of the Ada Township water and sewer rates. Ada Township is a wholesale customer of Grand Rapids. The water and sewer fund balances are both very healthy and both systems are debt-free as of January 2010, but the costs allocated to Ada Township for their portion of the Saddleback Sewer reconstruction may put the sewer system back into debt. The Board discussed the allocation

percentages for the cost of the Saddleback Sewer reconstruction. Township Engineer Groenenboom indicated those questions were best answered by Grand Rapids. **Moved by Westra to postpone action on the water and sanitary sewer rate study proposal. Support by Sytsma.** The Board commended the high quality of the report, but noted the results of the forcemain analysis were still pending. The Board discussed the pending test results of the forcemain analysis.

Yes - 5, No - 1; Motion to postpone carried.

GENERAL TOWNSHIP BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of Minutes

May 10, 2010, Regular Board Meeting

Receive and File Various Reports/Communications

1. Fire Call Reports - 04/2010; 2. Economic Workforce Development At Local Level Survey Results - 04/2010; 3. DDA Board Minutes - 04/05/2010; 4. Ada Township - Reith Riley Road Dust - 05/11/2010; 5. MTA Legislative Update Fax - 04/30/2010, 05/07/2010; 6. Open Space Preservation Advisory Board Minutes - 04/08/2010; 7. Building Permit Report - 04/2010; 8. Email from Trustee Westra to Board and Township Auditor RE: Purchasing Policy with Supervisor Haga's Response - 05/19/2010 (added to list per Board vote below); 9. Email from Township Engineer Groenenboom - Non-Motorized Trail Update - 05/21/2010 (added to list per Board vote below). **Moved by Westra, supported by Sytsma, to approve the Minutes and accept the reports and communications under the Consent Agenda.** Clerk Burton noted that "the Melody subdivision" cited in Opportunity for Additional Public Comment at the end of page 4 should have been "the Mela-Via subdivision".

Moved by Westra to amend the motion to include the communication from Trustee Westra to the Board and the Township Auditor regarding the purchasing policy along with Supervisor Haga's response. Support by Burton.

Yes - 6, No - 0; Amendment to the motion carried.

Moved by Smith to amend the motion to include the communication from Township Engineer Groenenboom with the update to the non-motorized trail. Support by Sytsma.

Yes - 6, No - 0; Second amendment to the motion carried.

Yes - 6, No - 0; Motion as twice amended carried.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS AND RECEIPTS

Treasurer Rhoades presented Warrants and Receipts in the following amounts: Hand Checks: #101 \$19,624.82; #205 \$1,056.44; #208 \$1,268.70; #590 \$486.70; #591 \$486.70; #592 \$19.84; Total All Hand Checks \$22,943.20. Warrants: #101 \$27,058.95; #205 \$51,711.12; #208 \$12,169.46; #211 \$150.00; #213 \$1,400.76; #590 \$96,400.82; #591 \$129,982.31; #592 \$6,284.33; Total Warrants \$325,157.75. Total All Checks and Warrants \$348,100.95. **Moved by Trustee Smith, supported by Trustee Westra, to approve the Warrant Report for May 24, 2010, in the total amount of \$348,100.95.**

Trustee Sytsma asked for clarification on the curbside cleanup costs; Supervisor Haga indicated they were the pickup charges that were billed for 2009 at a 10% discount. Regarding Item #6 for Ryan's Modern Sewer Cleaning, Trustee Westra noted the significant expenditure had not been put out for bid. Treasurer Rhoades noted the correction on the description for Item #29, which should have cited open space mailing, instead of Adaview mailing. He also clarified the Egypt Valley Country Club charge cited in Item #32 related to the Michigan Tax Tribunal matter. Supervisor Haga explained the fireman vaccine listed in Item #46 were for new employees in the Fire Department.

Roll Call: Yes - Sytsma, Smith, Westra, Rhoades, Burton, Haga. No - 0. Absent - Proos. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT OTHER THAN AGENDA

Karen Holt, 5701 3 Mile, noted she was not surprised by the vote to move forward on the 3 Mile hill paving project. She was pleased no one pushed for a wider road, as the 24' width will preserve most of the wildlife habitat.

Robert Ripley, 6060 3 Mile, requested the Township work with the County to have the speed limit lowered to 45 miles per hour on Pettis from 4 Mile to Knapp; the current allowable driving speeds are dangerous. Supervisor Haga indicated a formal speed study is fairly extensive, but he would talk to the Kent County Road Commission to try to get enforcement for that area. Mr. Ripley also indicated the guardrail just south of 4 Mile on Pettis needs repair.

BOARD COMMENT

Trustee Westra called attention to the letter he had sent to the Township Auditor requesting examination of the Township purchasing practices; he felt there has been a failure of standards. He recommended Board members attend the upcoming Michigan Township Association's seminar on "Effective Policies & Procedures for Managing Your Township" which he and Trustee Smith have already attended; he found the training very valuable. Supervisor Haga is scheduled to attend the upcoming seminar. Trustee Westra also requested the Board have a work session to review Township policies.

Trustee Westra expressed concern the email to all Board members is being received; his email to one of the members was bounced when he sent it.

Trustee Smith noted a recent article in the *Grand Rapids Press* on striping the East Beltline to indicate one lane on the turn lanes. She noticed that it has also been done on portions of M-21, which is welcome. Supervisor Haga has contacted the Michigan Department of Transportation to inquire why they didn't also do the section on the east side of the river.

Trustee Smith inquired if the three grass fires cited on the April 10 Fire Call Report were permit fires. Supervisor Haga indicated he would check with the Fire Chief.

Clerk Burton noted the *Grand Rapids Press* had a very nice article on the Children's Garden at the Ada Farmers' Market. The Board agreed the Children's Garden was a great program and commended everyone involved. Supervisor Haga commented the very positive response was encouraging, but indicated the program was full as a result and registration was closed.

Trustee Sytsma agreed the Township purchasing policy needed to be reviewed and updated. She emphasized she was not in favor of terminating existing relationships with exemplary vendors.

Supervisor Haga noted a letter had just been received from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment that indicated a permit had been approved for the construction of a temporary bridge across M-21. This was not the alternative to closing the M-21 bridge during construction that had been expected. Instead, there will be a temporary two-way traffic bridge constructed this winter to allow the main construction to commence in spring of 2011. This will not increase Ada Township's costs.

Supervisor Haga reported to the Board on the excavation of the sanitary sewer forcemain to examine the four areas targeted as potentially compromised according to the cell-to-cell survey report submitted by the contractor, Det Norske Veritas (DNV). Given some of the challenges encountered, the total cost for the excavations and replacement of pipe as needed may exceed the original allocation. DNV will submit a final report of their analysis.

Supervisor Haga noted the Finance Committee (Supervisor Haga, Treasurer Rhoades, Trustee Proos) would be reviewing the purchasing policy and recommending actions as needed to the Board. Current practices are not direct violations of the policy, as there are allowable exceptions. Nonetheless, the policy needs to be updated. He indicated a policy work session should have a plan or even a professional advisor to guide the Board through the various issues.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Thomas, 8700 3 Mile, noted there had, on several recent occasions, been a strong scent of gas similar to methane down by the river. The Board was not sure as to the possible source of the odor.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Susan Burton
Ada Township Clerk**

RS/kj