

MINUTES
Twin Lakes Township
Thursday, February 8, 2018
Gillogly Road Public Information Meeting
at the Carlton County Transportation Building
6:00 p.m.

Those present are listed on the sign-in pages attached, which are a part of these official minutes.

Twin Lakes Township Board Chair Diane Felde-Finke welcomed everyone, and she introduced engineers Tom DesMarais and David Bolf from Northland Consulting Engineers (NCE), attorney Holly LaBoone-Haller, and members of the Twin Lakes Town Board; Supervisor John Vernon, Supervisor Randy Willie, Treasurer Stephanie Schmitz, and Clerk Sue Chapin.

Bolf explained that the Town Board hired NCE hired about a year ago to do a preliminary study on Gillogly Road improvements. DesMarais is the project's design engineer.

DesMarais explained how the Gillogly Road project was broken out into three phases. Phase 1, which will be done this year, is the worst section of the road, and includes the low swamp area, along with sight distance issues. As NCE's work has continued, it became clear that the road is much worse than originally thought. The road, which is supposed to run along the section line, actually varies 3' to 4', one way or the other, off of the section line. Part of the goal is to get the road back on alignment with the section line. Up to 19' will be dug out of the muck section, and the road will be raised 2' in that area. Larger culverts will be put in for better flow. The large hill on the south side of the swamp will be lowered, and will be posted at 35 MPH. The hill on the north side of the swamp will have some work done in Phase 1. The estimated cost for the Phase 1 project is \$1.4 million. The other two phases have not yet been designed.

This project was originally going to be a rehabilitation, but is now a reconstruction. Around 30,000 yards of material is going to be moved. The road will be closed to through-traffic during construction. Some driveways may be changed by 2' or 3', but access to properties will be kept. The goal is for residents to have access to their driveways daily. If there is going to be a problem with that, the contractor will contact the resident affected.

Once Phase 1 is complete, it will be kept as gravel for a minimum of one year, and probably longer, to let that section settle before paving. This is a common practice when dealing with such a deep dug-out section. There will be some relocation of utilities. The plan is to salvage mailboxes, and new supports will be provided. Driveways will get new culverts, consistent with what the county uses; a high-density plastic pipe. Striping will be done.

Bolf explained that we are working to establish easements, and that the permanent easements for the entire road will be 33' from the center line. The ribbons that are currently in place along the road are for survey purposes, and do not indicate the edge of the ROW. Temporary construction easements are also needed at this point for Phase 1. Once construction is done, those easements expire. The permanent easements will stay in place. The permanent easements available for review tonight are for the entire road. The easements for Phase 1 also include the temporary construction easement language.

Felde-Finke stated that when township roads were designed in the past, ROW width was not defined. In 1959, that changed, and township road ROW was supposed to be 33' from center (66' total). Township roads were not usually recorded, but when roads are reconstructed, that is when townships typically have easements recorded. Twin Lakes Township has never assessed any property owners for reconstruction of roads. The funding for these projects is from the Road and Bridge levy. Residents usually sign easements because they want the benefit of having their road reconstructed.

The meeting was opened up for questions, which were answered by the engineers and board members:

Question: Will the road have shoulders?

Answer: Yes, the road will have 22' of bituminous and 3' gravel shoulders. The existing road is 22' with no shoulder. Slopes will be softened.

Question: What will happen to the trees?

Answer: Typically the contractor takes care of clearing and grubbing, and everything is removed from the site. The contractor has control of the project; if a resident wants the trees, or fill, they will need to talk with the contractor, it is not in the Township's control. Blacktop is being reclaimed.

Question: What will the weight limit be, and will logging trucks be able to go through?

Answer: It is being designed as a 9 ton road. During construction, the road will be closed to through-traffic. Bolf recommends that the road remain a 5 ton until all three phases are done. Even when it is a 9 ton road, logging trucks would only be able to go through if they meet that criteria.

Question: Will there be ditches?

Answer: Yes, except for swamp area. Bolf explained that the purpose of the ditch is to purvey water, and also to keep water away from the road section, which minimizes frost action. All driveways in Phase 1 will have culverts.

Question: How soon will the road be paved?

Answer: The goal is within two years, and it would be done at the same time that Phase 2 of the project is paved. It may take up to two years for the road to settle.

Question: There is no purpose to spend this money; you should just fix the road on the north end and the south end, and close off the swamp section. The road only gives a shortcut to through-traffic, so why are we doing Phase 1 at all?

Answer: Residents of Gillogly Road have been asking for the road to be redone for many years. Bolf explained safety issues with closing off the road and making two dead-ends (emergency vehicles, maintenance vehicles). Other residents in attendance expressed that they want the road to remain a through-road.

Question: Why don't we wait on Phase 1 until after the Enbridge project, which may possibly go through?

Answer: If the Enbridge project happens, they will be instructed to bore, not dig up the road.

Question: The current speed limit is 45 MPH, but everyone drives 55 MPH. Can we set the speed limit at 35 MPH to slow traffic down a little bit?

Answer: People will always drive fast, and there will be increased traffic, but the road will be much safer, and they won't be speeding on a dangerous road. Taking down the hill on the south side will improve sight distance. The Town Board can request more patrolling of the road.

Question: What will the speed limit be?

Answer: It will be 45 MPH for the entire road, and 35 MPH on the hills.

Question: Can bumper strips be put on the road?

Answer: No, because that makes it hard for maintenance; snow plow would shear them off.

Question: When will construction begin?

Answer: The earliest start date is the end of May, and it is anticipated that the project will go until mid-October.

Question: I live in the Phase 3 area, why would I sign an easement now when that phase isn't designed yet?

Answer: The 33' ROW permanent easement is the same for all three phases. What may change is where the centerline of the road is, due to the wavering from the section line being corrected, as previously mentioned. The temporary construction easements for Phases 2 and 3 will be requested at a future time, when design is worked on and it's known what is needed.

Question: I work shift work; what if I come home at night and can't get to my house?

Answer: If there is going to be any issue with access to a home, the contractor will contact the resident. The contractor will work with residents with special needs or considerations, which is common practice for this type of project. The contractor has a 24/7 emergency contact.

Question: We have trees that will be within the 33' ROW, and they provide a wind break for the road. Will they be removed?

Answer: In a case like that, the Township can certainly look at keeping that feature.

There will be a lot of off-road equipment during construction, and it was recommended that residents stay away from that equipment, due to safety concerns. Once the plans are approved by the Town Board, the project will be advertised, bids will be opened, the lowest responsible bidder will be recommended to the Board, and there will be a Notice to Proceed. Once that is done, NCE works with the Township overseeing the project. Part of that oversight is holding construction meetings, which residents can attend. NCE will get phone numbers and emails of residents affected by the project, so that the contractor can notify residents of any updates. Notices will be sent out about construction meetings, and minutes can also be sent out. The key to the project's success is communication between everyone – the Board, NCE, residents, and the contractor.

Those in attendance had an opportunity to look at the project plans, and to review their easements (and sign them if they wished).

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Chapin, Clerk

Diane Felde-Finke, Board Chair