

**SCENIC DRIVE INFORMATIONAL MEETING MINUTES
LAKETON & FRUITLAND TOWNSHIP
MUSKEGON COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION
March 17, 2009
7:00 PM**

PRESENT – Fruitland Supervisor St. Amour, Laketon Supervisor Kim Arter, Fruitland Clerk Karolyn Rillema, MCRC Managing Director Ken Hulka, MCRC Highway Engineer Paul Bouman, MCRC Maintenance Superintendent Laurie Peterson.

ALSO PRESENT – Sixty-eight (68) interested parties

CALLED TO ORDER –

Supervisor St. Amour called the Tuesday, March 17, 2009 Scenic Drive Informational meeting to order at 6:59 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE –

Supervisor St. Amour asked all to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for a moment of silence for our troops overseas.

INTRODUCTIONS –

Supervisor St. Amour introduced various commissioners, board members and road commission representatives in attendance and introduced the panel. He thanked the group of citizens who have been meeting with Supervisor Arter, the Road Commission and himself resulting in this informational meeting for the proposed road work on Scenic Drive.

BACKGROUND –

Supervisor Arter gave a brief history and thanked the group of citizens for taking the time to meet. They toured Scenic Drive with a trolley ride and witnessed water on the road and looked at potential trees to be removed. She thanked Fruitland Township for hosting this information meeting and looking forward to the progress going forward.

Mr. Ken Hulka, MCRC Managing Director stated that road projects are determined by need. Scenic Drive is not a main traveled road for most. Traditional funding is insufficient and getting worse. Mr. Hulka stated that every road is dependent on Federal Funding. The challenge to the Road Commission is to repair Scenic Drive at minimal investment with the best drainage and with minimal tree removal. Mr. Hulka explained that approximately \$500,000.00 is coming from the rural roads funds and approximately \$700,000.00 is coming from Stimulus money. The Road Commission's plans are to pave Scenic Drive from Fenner Road north as far as the \$1.2 million in funding will take them with two 10 foot lanes with gravel shoulders. Mr. Hulka stated that costs are inhibitive at this point to include paved shoulders in the paving process. Some tree removal will be necessary to help with the life cycle of the road and for safety reasons.

Mr. Paul Bouman, MCRC Highway Engineer stated that Scenic Drive was built in 1926 and has survived 83 winters. Scenic Drive had an asphalt overlay in 1966 and surface seal on cracks in the late 1980's. The paving of Scenic Drive would require removing the old asphalt, fix joint repairs and cracks in the concrete, repair areas of road that have failed and asphalt 40 feet with 5 foot gravel shoulders. Currently the Road Commission is marking trees within a 10' range of the pavement for removal for safety and better drainage. This work would also include replacement of guard rails and some shoulder work. They are doing the best they can to preserve the character of the road but provide the best drainage and least tree removal for Scenic Drive.

Mrs. Laurie Peterson, MCRC Maintenance Superintendent stated that water is the worst enemy for any road. They spent 36 days in Fruitland Township and 51 days in Laketon Township at a cost of approximately \$140,000.00 for maintenance work on Scenic Drive last year alone.

PUBLIC COMMENT –

- 1) David Anderson, 4110 Scenic Drive - stated that he felt Scenic Drive had been neglected in condition and was the last to be plowed in the winter months allowing the snow and ice to lay on it that much longer. He invited everyone to drive down Scenic Drive and felt it was a waste to repair roads if we can't maintain what we currently have.
- 2) Ken Trojan, 5688 Simonelli Road – stated that the Scenic Drive ride is beautiful and the road is terrible. Mr. Trojan would like his road maintained to a drivable condition. It is currently a mud pile.
- 3) Al Posthuma, 611 Scenic Drive – asked how shoulders are being handled because Scenic Drive is a major tourist route with lots of bicycles, pedestrians and walker. Paul Bouman (MCRC) stated that at this point, the funds are tightly constrained and are not feasible at this time with the funding available. There are a number of pinch points (Duck Lake State Park, Duck Lake, Muskrat Lake and Muskegon State Park) where the road does not allow for further expansion of road for paving of shoulders. Mr. Potshuma asked about possibly getting a price for the paving of the shoulders only and Mr. Bouman's (MCRC) response was that it is not an option.
- 4) Robert Fles, 2543 Scenic Drive – was in favor of tree removal but would like MCRC to find a way to pave the shoulders.
- 5) Kathy Hoogstra, 779 Scenic Drive – asked as of today what was the stretch of Scenic planned in the proposed budgeted amount of money and when would it start. Mr. Hulka (MCRC) stated that it would be Fenner Road north and could start the latter part of their season.
- 6) Jack LeDeough, 3119 Scenic Drive – stated someone once said “You cannot have a decent level of society without a certain level of taxation.” He suggested that all should contact their state representatives and senators and encourage a gasoline tax increase.
- 7) Theresa Schneider, 3340 Scenic Drive – asked if residents of Scenic would have access to their driveways during the repair. Paul Bowman (MCRC) stated that that should not be a problem as they would have a travelable path for residents to get to and from their homes and work should go quickly once the project got started.
- 8) Dennis Hughes, 5333 Scenic Drive – asked Paul Bouman (MCRC) where the road signage would say ROAD CLOSED. He owns a business called The White Duck Market that depends on summer traffic. He asked them to really consider avoiding July 4

through Labor Day if possible. Bouman (MCRC) again stated that it would be scheduled late construction season which would have to be completed by mid-November because of temperatures and this would be a fast moving project.

- 9) Bruce Walpole, 5309 Beechwood Drive – asked if trees would be removed in areas that the road already has positive drainage and if the road was being engineered with a crown. Paul Bouman (MCRC) answered yes to both questions but did say that trees would be evaluated on individual basis for safety reasons.
- 10) Ron Peel, 6405 Sheltering Way – felt that Scenic Drive needed to be paved. It sets a low standard for our community. Trees need to be trimmed where branches are low. Asked if the State of Michigan would reconsider the gross vehicle weight restrictions. We also allow two times our neighboring states.
- 11) Al VandeVusse, 2784 Scenic Drive – agrees that Scenic Drive needs to be paved but with 3’ paved shoulders from State Park to State Park. He also mentioned that he spoke with the Allen’s who own the Red Rooster on Scenic Drive and they have felt the lower number of guests visiting their restaurant/bar because of the inability to travel the road comfortably. He also asked what the dots and x’s meant. Paul Bouman (MCRC) stated that “x’s” mean trees in question and dots are to be removed and that paint color did not make a difference either. Mr. VandeVusse stated that most of the trees that are present now were not there in 1926 when the road was constructed.
- 12) Chuck Mullaly, 2925 Scenic Drive – has lived on Scenic Drive 40 years and would like to see higher taxes on gasoline. Agrees that shoulders should be paved because the road is not wide enough.
- 13) Steve Schultz, 840 Scenic Drive – asked if power/telephone poles within the 10’ range of road would have to be moved. Paul Bouman (MCRC) stated that he did not feel that any of those were interfering with drainage and felt that it would be debatable with Consumer’s to have them moved.
- 14) Charlie Deupree, 6142 Scenic Woods Circle – would like to see all utilities underground and would like Scenic Drive to remain scenic. Paved shoulders are a must and felt at this time in our economy that deals could be made to receive competitive bids on the resurfacing.
- 15) Matt Vanderzydes, Winter Sports Complex – also agrees that paved shoulders are a must. With the twists and turns, the road itself is dangerous for bicyclists and runners. He serves as the Director of a Bike Triathlon and has had to remove the Block House hill from its tour. He recommended using Lakeshore Drive in Grand Haven as a model for what Scenic should look like.
- 16) Tom King, 2144 Horton Road – would like a bike path, but is not in favor of raising the tax on gasoline. Maybe Michigan should install toll booths to travel our Michigan highways like other states.
- 17) Bill Traynor, 6305 Sheltering Way – agrees that the road should be paved so residents do not have to avoid it by traveling an east/west road. Repair work should be done so with as minimal tree removal as possible to retain its look. Paved shoulders would help with the safety of our children and us. He thanked both Ken Hulka and Paul Bouman (MCRC) for their initiative in less tree removal and is pleased with the number of trees to be spared.

Supervisor St. Amour stated that the minutes of this meeting would be available on both Laketon and Fruitland Township websites. He invited all to sign up for Fruitland Townships' e-news which is available at www.fruitlandtwp.org, click on e-news.

- 18) Cindy Ackerman, 2195 Scenic Drive – asked if all trees were marked and wondered about the 10' from the edge of the road. Paul Bouman (MCRC) stated that trees from Fenner Road to Michillinda Road are marked for removal from 10' out from road edge. No trees had been marked from Fenner Road south. Shoulder of about 4 feet and swales not ditches would be excavated 6 – 9 inches and about 6 feet wide to ensure positive drainage because of its sandy base.
- 19) Bob Ackerman, 2195 Scenic Drive – asked about pole utilities that are 6 – 8 foot off road and if they are considered in the clear zone, what the landscape guidelines are and that the trees provide a canopy to protect the road. Paul Bouman (MCRC) would like to provide at least 10' of clear zone but Scenic Drive has some practical limitations for safety and said that the landscape would meet guidelines suggested by Federal Highway Administration and M-Dot. Currently the trees may provide a canopy but they also hinder the roads to dry off because of the canopy.
- 20) Chris Kelly, 1315 Scenic Drive – agrees that shoulders should be paved and inquired about a possible special assessment for shoulder paving for those that lived on Scenic Drive. Supervisor St. Amour asked for an informal show of hands in favor and not in favor. A vast majority of the crowd raised hands for agreement with special assessment and only three raised hands being not in favor for special assessment.
- 21) Todd Groesel, 990 Scenic Drive/5700 Scenic Drive – Asked about satisfaction of clearing of ditches from Giles to Fenner. Ken Hulka (MCRC) stated that ditches clearly are okay on the east side but the west side needs attention. No trees were removed in that stretch. Supervisor St. Amour stated that if residents would like to see an area that would resemble what Scenic Drive would look like with swales to observe Scenic Drive from Duck Lake Road south on the east side to get an idea. Mr. Groesel asked what the final dollar amount was. Ken Hulka (MCRC) stated that the Stimulus money was captured and the other money was in final stages to complete the approximate \$1.2 million dollars.

Supervisor closed the public comment and thanked all in attendance, especially those Commissioners, board members of both Fruitland and Laketon Townships and additional members of the Muskegon County Road Commission.

ADJOURNMENT – Supervisor St. Amour adjourned the informational meeting at 8:15 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Karolyn Rillema, Clerk
Township of Fruitland