

PLAN COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF GRANT
November 16, 2016

PRESENT: Jim Wendels (Chairman), Nathan Wolosek, Ron Becker, Sharon Schwab, Tom Reitter
(arrived at 7:45 pm) (Commission Members), Marty Rutz, (Zoning Administrator), Kathy
Lee (Secretary)

TOWN BOARD SUPERVISOR: Dale Winkler

GUESTS: Richard Rashke, Lucas Wysocki

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Jim Wendels.

STATE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

It was stated that the agenda was posted at two posting stations (Grant Town Hall and the Grant Transfer Station) and on the Town's website.

MINUTES

It was moved by R. Becker and seconded by S. Schwab to approve the October 19, 2016 Plan Commission Meeting Minutes. The motion passed with unanimous ayes.

IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY (IoH)

The annual review of the current option used by the Town to govern IoH occurred. The Town currently uses Option D. This option allows the Town to designate roads for over-weight/over-length IoH and agriculture commercial motor vehicle (Ag CMVs).

Discussion started with a review of the designated routes to determine what is working and what is not working:

- Complaints have been received about Elm Street being used by IoH vehicles although it is not a designated route.
- Richard Rashke (Okray Family Farms representative) stated they would like to see Elm opened to IoH traffic. Canning companies have used Elm in the past, but were reported to the police last year. They would like Elm to be extended to 95th Street or minimally extend it west of 100th to the middle of the field (about ¼ mile west of 100th).
- North of Elm on 110th is deteriorating. That is why the canning companies have tried to avoid 110th and have used Elm Street.
- Dale Winkler questioned the use of Washington Street. R. Rashke responded that is done in error. Typically they will come in via Washington empty and leave in another direction.
- Luke Wysocki (Wysocki Produce Farm Inc representative) stated no addition routes on town roads are required in the southern portion of the Town.
- Semi-trucks have been observed on roads not designated for IoH use. This led to the question of how cranberry growers are moving their crops out.
- It was suggested to remove the section of road over the culvert on 100th as an IoH route. No one currently uses the route because of the culvert.

Discussion took place on actions that aid and interfere with road usage:

- D. Winkler stated some farmers help by mowing further than required.
- R. Rashke stated that the T. of Plover has allowed the driveways to be made wider. This allows semi-trucks to exit more easily.

- D. Winkler would like farmers to not water the roads. R. Rashke said it is an equipment failure when roads are watered. They do try to reset the end guns. GPS upgrades have made the equipment more accurate. L. Wysocki stated they are gradually changing to medium end guns, but it is an expensive process. Ultimately farmers try to avoid dry corners.
- R. Becker questioned if trucking patterns would change with crop rotation. The answer was no. All of the current IoH roads are needed. Canning companies would be using the road when the farmer is not using it.
- D. Winkler would like to see canning companies travel the shortest distance possible on unpaved town roads. The response to his comment was farmers can suggest routes, but have limited control over the routes used by canners.
- D. Winkler would like to see driveways fixed.
- Concern was expressed that there is “no room for error” when two trucks meet on graded roads. The graded crown contributes to this. Lake was used as an example of trucks/trailers slipping off the road when it was wet and the surface was greasy. 130th Street has also been greasy and puddled.

Discussion took place regarding permits:

- S. Schwab stated Del Monte would like to use an electronic submission via email. It costs \$2.50 per permit, but results in faster turn-around. She is signing up via the Town Associations for this alternative.
- R. Rashke stated the State has recommended that if no equipment changes are being made, a permit is not required annually. The permit automatically renews. N. Wolosek recommended that the Town use a similar approach.
- L. Wysocki stated fewer permits would be necessary if the weight limit was higher than the 1% above the State Chapter 348 limits. In November 2015, the Plan Commission recommended changing the limit to 10%, but the Town Board made no changes in November to the ordinance approved in January 2015, therefore the limit remained at 1%.
- N. Wolosek would like to see perpetual permits. L. Wysocki stated other towns have gone to perpetual permits. Even a longer permit, for example 3 years, would be helpful.
- A new electronic system that has been developed to monitor the permits. The farming equipment is being combined digitally and total weight determined. L. Wysocki was contributed to its development.

Discussion took place on specific roads of concern:

- It was suggested to add ¼ mile on Elm Street, west of 100th Street, to the IoH roads. That section of road is currently under consideration for paving.
- D. Winkler suggested adding material to Elm on the unpaved section east of 100th as far as 110th.
- Access to fields and limiting travel on Elm could be achieved by adding a driveway on 100th Street. Driveways were discussed in general. Copies of the Driveway Ordinance were distributed. R. Becker stated the Board does have the authority to approve driveway designs that vary from the descriptions in the Driveway Ordinance. Larger driveways (e.g. 100 ft) enable large equipment to pull off the road allowing other drivers to get around them and make it easier for large equipment to enter and exit the fields without tearing up the roads.
- There are concerns about the poor condition of non-town roads including County F and Hwy 54. Paved shoulders on County F is desired.
- Concerns about Birch Road were discussed. R. Rashke summarized problems with the road as no grading until August, followed by the road getting beat-up all winter long, and then it is not touched in spring.
- R. Becker asked if the farmers could recommend roads for the Town to prioritize for spending money. R. Rashke recommended Birch Street and N. Wolosek recommended Townline Road north

of Buena Vista Road. Birch would likely need material, while Townline would need muck removed first.

- The stop sign on Angle Drive needs to be moved. A yield sign could be inserted in its place.

Cost of road maintenance was discussed:

- Reportedly in the next State budget, the most Towns will receive from the State for roads is an \$80 per mile increase.
- It was asked if the farmer who use Birch would be willing to contribute toward its maintenance. Both Wolosek and Rashke expressed that if they contributed to material being placed on the road that they would want to take over the road. It would no longer be a town road.
- R. Becker stated farmers are the primary uses of certain roads. The town has limited funds. A road may be given higher priority if the town received contributions towards maintenance on the road.
- Wysocki did grade 90th Street in the spring after heavy use.
- N. Wolosek said farmers have no protection if they perform road maintenance. Sharon said the farmer would need to become an agent of the Town to be protected. Farmers would need to sign a hold harmless agreement with the Town to protect the Town.
- Roads hold up when they are brought up, ditches placed, and good material used. Money can be saved in grading when decent material is used.
- S. Schwab asked if the farmers have access to a cost share that could be used to assist with road maintenance. No one was aware of any.
- Numerous ag-related groups do lobby in Madison for increased road funding.

Conclusions:

- J. Wendels summarized the suggestions to add and take away routes, increase the maximum load, and use automatic permit renewal.
- Input is needed from Mike Smith regarding where he farms and his needed routes.
- It was questioned if the T. of Grant could use Option B (Total Opt Out). That option is used in Plover. Plover communicates the preferred routes in an informal manner. Using Option D does not guarantee there is no travel of IoH on non-designated roads.
- The Town does like having information regarding which growers are using which roads.

PORTAGE COUNTY DRAINAGE DISTRICT (PCDD)

- A letter from the Portage County Drainage District was shared. It summarizes upcoming projects which will occur in 3 phases. Phase 1 is totally in T. of Grant. R. Rashke described the projects. Up until now no clearing has taken place of the ditches because of the need for NR 216 permits first. The PCDD Board has partnered with the State of WI to identify the Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat. One side of some ditches have been brush cut. They have needed to scout for Karner Blue butterflies, blue lupines, and Wood turtles. Once the permits are obtained, they will take down trees, level spoils, and clean the ditches back to the original Specs. They would like to keep the Canary Weed Grass out of ditches with the use of Aquatic Rodeo. Flow through the ditches tends to be good when the Canary Weed Grass is controlled.
- It is a three year project. Hopefully it would start in 2017 and end in 2019. Tree removal is needed as soon as possible because they are causing sloughing into the ditches.
- Town roads will not be impacted by these projects (no impact on culverts).

- Property owners should be aware of the 100 ft corridor. The realtors do not always notify them. Landscaping with 100 ft of the ditch could be torn up. The 100 ft is measured from the high water level.
- DATCP dictates the leveling of ditch banks, but those regulations do not apply to wetlands.
- If silt needs to be moved out, the cost may lead to an increased tax levy.
- REI has profiled all the drainage districts. This provides a historical marker to designate ditch depth.
- The PCDD board has been working with the Army Corp for Wetland Determination.
- It was suggested to include an overlay map of the PCDD corridors in the Comprehensive Plan.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

There is a public hearing on November 28th at 6:00 pm in Adams County if anyone is interested in seeing their plan.

There are two things outstanding in our application. The questions that need to be answered are 1) there is no land zoned for FP in the T. of Grant that is not in Portage County's farmland preservation plan area and 2) the zoning ordinance is at least 80% consistent with the FP plan map for the Town of Grant. Both of those are true statements.

S. Schwab states we are waiting the signed sheet from Jeff Schuler and that Jeff Hartman will send him the final maps. She has completed the application, but still had questions about the citations that were not required to be submitted.

It is still doubtful that any of our farmers will apply for FP.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Nine permits were issued for a total of \$410. This includes an accessory building, a raze, a new resident/deck, two driveways, and four UAPs. Clean up/demolition following fire at 4011 130th St. S. Clean-up does involve asbestos. The DNR and the GRVFD have been involved.
- The signed CUP and check received has been received from Portage County for the Communication Tower. Okray will be moving their telemetry and GPS to tower at a height of 125 feet.
- Earl Arndt, representing the non-profit Veterans and Friends Helping Veterans organization, is interested in purchasing property on 90th and Mill Road. The programs offered to the veterans still need to be clarified. He would like to discuss their plans before making an offer on the 60 acres. He will be invited to the December 21st meeting.

TOWN BOARD REPORT

- Portage County did get a grant for a bicycle path. The Town did not get the Safe Route to School grant for a bike path in Grant.
- The Portage County Groundwater Citizen Advisory Committee is meeting on November 17th at 7:00pm. They are still accepting feedback on the groundwater management plan.
- The public hearing was held on the Farmland Preservation Overlay Ordinance. There were no farmers in attendance. It was passed. It know will go to Portage County Planning and Zoning and then to the County Board. N. Wolosek suggested making it clear in the next newsletter that a farmer is only under the conditions if they participate in the FP program.

There is no transparency in the program. The Town will not know who, if anyone, is participating.

- Emergency services were discussed at the most recent Wisconsin Towns Association meeting. There are other towns that feel as we do that we are not being adequately protected. The County's recommendation is to spend nearly one million dollars to place an ambulance in the Town of Plover rather than to spend \$40,000 for the T. of Grant and \$5,000 for the T. of Belmont. It will cost \$13 per capita to add the Plover ambulance. Doing so will not improve response time to Grant, Pine Grove, and Belmont. It would cost less than \$1 per capita to cover Towns, such as Grant, with out-of-county ambulance coverage. The proposed plan is centered around the urban areas and not the rural areas.

CITIZEN INPUT

N. Wolosek stated he would like to see the T. of Grant petition Portage County regarding adding a bike lane to County Road F. He intends to write a letter to Nathan Check to request the bike lane. He hopes that Okray and Wysocki would do the same. The road needs to be widened to accommodate bikes. R. Becker explained the difference between a bike accommodation and a bike lane. A paved shoulder is three feet and a bike accommodation is four to five feet. Requesting a five foot bike accommodation would provide adequate space for farm vehicles. A joint letter from the growers was suggested. The Town could also send a letter.

ADJOURNMENT

N. Wolosek moved to skip agenda item 10 and adjourn the meeting. T. Reitter seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen D. Lee

Plan Commission Secretary