

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD JOINT MEETING - **APPROVED** -  
HOSTED BY THE INGHAM COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION  
Austin E. Cavanaugh Administration Building  
301 Bush Street, Mason, MI, 48854  
(517) 676-9722, Board Room  
THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2002, **7:00 P.M.**

MERIDIAN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

PRESENT: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Hunting, Trustees Brixie, Such,  
Woiwode

ABSENT: Trustee Stier

STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards, Director of Engineering & Public Works Ray Severy

INGHAM COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

PRESENT: Chair Larry R. Smith, Vice Chair June H. Pallottini, Commissioner Jean M. McDonald

STAFF: John W. Midgley, Managing Director, Deborah L. Bellows, Secretary to the Board, Sandra  
F. Montgomery, Administrative Services Director, Joseph D. Pulver, Director of Operations,  
Robert H. Peterson, Director of Engineering, David J. Sonnenberg, Director of Traffic and  
Safety

DELHI CHARTER TOWNSHIP

PRESENT: Supervisor Serge Leduc, Clerk Evan Hope, Trustees Steve Anderson, Roy W. Sweet, Paul  
Krepps, Marsha Bowers

STAFF: John Elsinga, Manager, Robert Scheuerman, Engineer, Jim Sturdevant, Director of  
Community Development

LANSING CHARTER TOWNSHIP

PRESENT: Supervisor John Daher, Trustee Howard Love

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER Joint Meeting with the Ingham County Road Commission  
Chair Smith and the respective chairs called their meetings to order at 7:00 P.M.
2. WELCOME - Ingham County Road Commission Chair  
Chair Smith welcomed the present township officials.
3. INTRODUCTION OF INGHAM COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION STAFF  
Chair Smith introduced the Ingham County Road Commission Board and staff.
4. FINANCE & CHANGES TO THE 2002 LOCAL ROAD ALLOCATIONS  
Managing Director John Midgley reviewed the Road Commission's funding and the reductions that  
were made for 2002. He explained why the Road Commission had to reduce the townships' local  
road allocations for this year. Mr. Midgley stated that the proposed Federal cuts in the highway  
program may impact the 2003 budget as well.  
  
Mr. Midgley stated that President Bush has agreed to restore some federal monies, but at this time,  
we are not sure how it will trickle down to us. He said that thanks to a relatively mild winter, the  
Road Commission would be able to do some primary road resurfacing this year.
5. 2002 CHIP SEAL OPERATION  
Director of Operations Joe Pulver indicated that his department would be performing routine  
maintenance on local roads this year, which includes patching and chip sealing. There will be no  
chip sealing in Lansing Township. There will be some done in the southwest corner of Delhi

Township, about sixteen (16) miles. There will be about seven miles done in Meridian Township over by MSU and on Van Atta Road. The Road Commission does not chip seal in the heavier urban areas, most is done in more rural type settings.

Mr. Pulver said that the chip seal extends the life of roads and the double chip seal is currently being used on some gravel roads. This is not as good as an asphalt surface, but is much less expensive and will last for several years.

6. ENGINEERING

B. Federal Aid Projects for 2002

Director of Engineering Bob Peterson stated the Road Commission has a large federal aid program this year. The bulk of the cost of those projects is covered with state and federal funds.

The Road Commission currently has four bridges that are being replaced with state critical bridge funds. Those are located in Onondaga, Ingham, Stockbridge, and Leroy Townships.

The federal aid projects include Haslett Road in Meridian Township, Lake Lansing Road and Kalamazoo Street in Lansing Township, bituminous surfacing and shoulders on Dexter Trail in Vevay Township and bituminous surfacing and shoulders on Barnes Road from College Road to Meridian Road in Vevay and Ingham Townships.

A. Primary Road Projects for 2002

The Road Commission's primary road surfacing program for 2002 will be bituminous resurfacing on Jackson Road in Leslie Township, Dansville Road in White Oak Township and Williamston Road in Ingham Township, for a total of about \$600,000. This program had to be cut from the original wish list.

Mr. Peterson stated he would like to have contracts for local road construction projects under way by mid-June.

C. Permit Issues - Land Divisions

Mr. Peterson said his department is in the process of rewriting the Road Commission's subdivision regulations. The draft form will be sent to the townships to review probably within a couple of months.

Mr. Peterson also said that the Road Commission has incurred problems with proprietors coming to it for development approval prior to township approval. He said he is trying to change this and will have it spelled out clearly in the new subdivision regulations. It will be made clear that township approval is required first before Road Commission approval. However, that does not mean that proprietors cannot get unofficial pre-preliminary approval from the Road Commission.

7. ESTABLISHMENT OF SPEED LIMITS

Director of Traffic and Safety Dave Sonnenberg discussed the MTA sponsored speed limit bill that was recently vetoed by Governor Engler. Mr. Sonnenberg said the bill was an attempt to get the townships as a signatory on traffic control orders. The County Road Association of Michigan and the Michigan State Police were not in favor of this bill because it would become too complicated to require those approvals on traffic control orders. However, Mr. Sonnenberg said he would like to see township involvement with the initial survey conducted by the Road Commission and the Michigan State Police and the Board will consider a proposed policy at its next meeting that will require notification to townships when these traffic surveys are going to be conducted so the township can have input in the decision making process if it desires to have. He said that the township supervisors and clerks will be notified and it will be the choice of the township if it is involved.

Meridian Township Trustee Andy Such asked if Mr. Sonnenberg could explain that process to him.

Mr. Sonnenberg said the Road Commission has an excellent brochure that explains the entire process and said he would provide them for the officials present who want one.

Meridian Township Trustee Julie Brixie stated there is new legislation that has been introduced which will provide for a six (6) county pilot program. She asked if Ingham County would be volunteering for this. Mr. Midgley stated Senator Byrum's office contacted him and advised him that the six counties for this program have already been selected and Ingham was not one of them.

8. COMMISSIONER/TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Meridian Township Supervisor Susan McGillicuddy asked if the area around Newman Road and Van Atta Road could not be chip sealed. She said these roads have no sidewalks and the only place for the kids to roller blade is on the road surface. When a chip seal surface has been put down, the stones make it difficult for the kids to ride bikes, roller blade, and roller skate. She said it would be nice if the Road Commission would reconsider chip sealing these roads.

Mr. Pulver said he could move to another area, but the chip seal surface does prolong the life of the road surface. The road surface will only be more costly to fix in the future if it is left unattended. Ms. McGillicuddy asked if there was anything else that could be used other than chip sealing and bituminous surfacing. Mr. Pulver said a micro surface could be used, but it is more expensive. The chip-sealing program is a preventive maintenance program for the roads, which is done at the Road Commission's cost. Ms. McGillicuddy asked if the micro surfacing could be done on one road so they can see what it looks like.

Delhi Township Trustee Marsha Bowers & Supervisor Leduc asked about the condition of and plans for Willoughby Road. Mr. Pulver answered.

Meridian Township Trustee Anne Woiwode asked about the funding decrease experienced by the Road Commission. Will this be a long-term situation? Mr. Midgley stated that the County Road Association of Michigan is challenging, in court, the Governor's Executive Order and no decision has been made yet. This could take some time getting through the court system. Mr. Midgley said that the Road Commission has a few positions it has not filled and may continue to do so in the future as employee retirements occur. The Road Commission is trying its best to maximize the federal dollars available and trying to get as much of those funds for various projects as possible.

Road Commissioner Jean McDonald asked how the townships set up their list for road repairs and how those are prioritized. She indicated that the area of Marsh Road and Bois Isle Drive are in need of repair. Ms. McDonald stated her priority as a Road Commissioner, is to repair existing roads.

Meridian Township Manager Gerald Richards stated that Marsh Road is a primary road, which would be prioritized solely by the Road Commission. For the local roads, Mr. Richards stated the Township engineers ride every road in the Township once a year and rate them according to condition. He said the Road Commission also has its own rating and provides the Township with a list of the roads it feels need repair. Mr. Richards said they then compare the two (2) lists and the Township selects road repairs according to funding. He said that Meridian Township would be putting \$110,000 toward road repairs in 2002. At this rate, Mr. Richards stated the Township is falling behind in keeping the roads in good repair. The Township did try to pass a millage three (3) years ago for road repairs, but it failed.

Meridian Township Trustee Andy Such stated they have a public hearing regarding all the roads on the proposed list, then they adopt the final list of roads that will have repairs done that particular year.

Road Commissioner Jean McDonald stated that possibly a media event could be set up to talk about

how bad the road system is. She said it seems there are more and more state and federal cuts while the road system needs more and more work.

Mr. Richards stated that is why the Township wants to take over the roads in Meridian Township. Then they could make the decisions on where the money is spent. He said that right now they have no control over what is done. He said they are not responsible for the decision making process, yet the law says they have to pay fifty percent (50%) of the cost of repairs on the local roads.

Lansing Township Trustee Howard Love stated that the Road Commission has always informed them of what roads need repair and what it thinks should be done. He said the list goes to their Public Works committee and the members of that committee go out and look at all the roads and compare their own list of needs with that of the Road Commission's. Mr. Love said the township makes adjustments if they feel the need and then inform the Road Commission of what they want to do. He said the Road Commission has always been cooperative in accepting their recommendations.

Meridian Township Supervisor Susan McGillicuddy asked what the traffic volume is on a road before the Road Commission considers widening it from a two- (2) lane road to a four- (4) lane road. The Township may be using this information in determining a rezoning issue.

Road Commission Board Chair Larry Smith commented that he realized Ms. McGillicuddy was talking about the Netzloff property and the area of Jolly Road and Okemos Road. He referred comments to the Road Commission's Director of Traffic and Safety, Dave Sonnenberg. Mr. Sonnenberg stated that many of the comments being made by various people have been relayed to him. He said that if a 300 unit housing development goes in on this property and it generates 3000 trips per day, all using the intersection of Jolly Road and Okemos Road at the same time is far from the actual truth. He said that while it is true that you figure each home generates about ten trips per day, this is actually figured over a twenty-four- (24) hour period, not all at once. He sated that if both adults from every house worked, that would generate about 600 vehicles every day. The assumption has been made that all that traffic will be going to the Jolly Road and Okemos Road intersection. Mr. Sonnenberg stated if a traffic study is conducted, it will show trip destination, but the idea that all that traffic will be going through the intersection of Jolly and Okemos is totally way out of proportion.

Supervisor McGillicuddy asked what the traffic volume would have to be in order to construct Hulett Road to four lanes. Mr. Sonnenberg said that Hulett Road is a local road and that it is unlikely it would ever be constructed to four (4) lanes. He stated the Road Commission does not build four (4) lanes much any more, we are going with three- (3) lane roads, with a center turn lane. He commented that in the past, usually around 10,000 vehicles per day or more would qualify a roadway to be considered for widening.

Supervisor McGillicuddy stated she is concerned about the traffic that will be generated by the 288 unit Governor's Collection development and the 300-unit Netzloff property.

Mr. Sonnenberg stated that the Road Commission has applied for federal highway funding to construct a roundabout at Bennett Road and Hulett Road. That will handle all that traffic for many years to come. He said that possibly Jolly and Hulett Roads would also be a candidate for a roundabout. Mr. Sonnenberg said he does not anticipate widening Hulett Road for a very long time.

Supervisor McGillicuddy asked what these two (2) developments would do to Jolly Road. Mr. Sonnenberg said that the Road Commission widened Jolly Road from Okemos Road to Hagadorn Road a few years ago with federal funds and he does not believe Jolly Road is even close to capacity, nor will it be for some time to come.

Meridian Township Trustee Anne Woiwode stated she felt the Road Commission should be conducting more traffic impact studies so that it would have a more comprehensive transportation-planning program. In the mix with the Road Commission, the agencies should do more than just react and direct where development goes.

Road Commission Managing Director John Midgley stated the Road Commission looks at zoning and development as township issues.

Trustee Woiwode stated it is an endless spiral.

Road Commission Board Chair Larry Smith stated that the townships see the projects first. While he understands that the developers “whipsaw” both sides, it is still the township who approves/disapproves the development prior to the Road Commission seeing it.

Chair Smith stated the Road Commission is going to start looking at the proposed road systems differently. Long straight roads will be strongly discouraged. Stop signs do not work to slow traffic. What will slow traffic is a different configuration of the road system. Mr. Smith said that the biggest problem is the residents within the subdivision itself. He said he knows this problem is common with all three (3) charter townships in the subdivisions. Residents always complain about traffic, speeding, and cut through traffic; but when studies are actually conducted, in most instances it is found that the violators are the residents themselves.

Trustee Woiwode asked if the Road Commission is thinking in terms of changing traffic design overall. The Township needs help with the different ways to slow traffic. She said we are all reactive to not so intelligent road design. She asked if there are plans to help them head off these problems ahead of time before they become like the Jolly-Okemos intersection.

Road Commission Board Chair Larry Smith stated that the place to do this is with the CARTS committee of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. All entities need to meet and work these problems out together.

Delhi Township Manger John Elsinga discussed problems with Cedar Street. Road Commission Managing Director John Midgley responded.

Meridian Township Trustee Julie Brixie stated that traffic calming in the new subdivision designs is a great idea and stated that plantings between the road and sidewalk would be helpful. She said that Van Atta Road is a good example and she feels success could be achieved if trees were allowed to be planted in the right of way.

Road Commission Director of Engineering Bob Peterson stated the Road Commission has a policy on trees. In fact, it is about ten pages long. This policy has been shared with Mark Kieselbach. Mainly it depends on the functional classification of the road and the average daily traffic. There are only specific species of trees permitted. You have to be very careful when considering planting trees in the right of way. Trees can be more harmful than good in most situations.

Road Commission Board Member June Pallottini stated it gets real tight trying to put a tree in the right of way because there is only thirty-three feet (33') either side of the centerline. Mr. Sonnenberg stated that vehicles backing out of driveways do not have proper sight distance when trees are planted in the right of way and it can make for a very hazardous situation.

Meridian Township Trustee Julie Brixie stated that they need pedestrian storage islands for people to cross the roads at locations other than intersections. She indicated the Township’s desire to have storage islands with green space built along roadways. Director of Traffic and Safety Dave

Sonnenberg stated that was originally planned for the improvements on Kinawa Drive, but the funding is not available right now for that project. Trustee Brixie asked if it could be done if the Township funded the islands. Mr. Sonnenberg said this roadway is in great need of resurfacing, curb and gutter and drainage. The Road Commission is considering the pedestrian storage islands, but it may be a year or two before this project can be funded.

Road Commission Board Chair Larry Smith stated that conversations need to be held with the school regarding its on-street parking. That makes a big difference and if the school could construct a parking lot and do away with parking on the street, it would be much easier to do this project. Bulbouts would be possible too.

Mr. Sonnenberg stated he and Meridian Township Engineer Ray Severy have met with the school officials and they are looking at the possibility of off street parking.

Trustee Brixie asked if there could be any pedestrian storage islands at Jolly and Hulett Roads. Mr. Sonnenberg said the road would have to be widened in order to make the room for them.

Delhi Township Supervisor Serge Leduc stated he thinks the pedestrian storage islands are a great idea. He said that Delhi Township is also interested in traffic calming measures. He asked that the Road Commission give this some serious thought.

Meridian Township Trustee Andy Such urged the Road Commission, as it adopts its new standards, to allow the Township some flexibility with developers. For instance, to allow for traffic calming. Trustee Such thanked the Road Commission for the roundabout at Marsh and Hamilton. He said he has become a "disciple" of calming. He also indicated he would like the Township to have flexibility with the widths of streets.

Road Commission Chair Larry Smith stated that the projects go to the townships first. Meridian Township Supervisor McGillicuddy stated regarding road widths, that the Township could require a twenty-five foot (25') wide roadway: but would the Road Commission allow them? Director of Traffic and Safety Dave Sonnenberg stated the Road Commission has standards that have to be followed. Trustee Such asked that they be given some flexibility with those standards.

Road Commission Chair Larry Smith stated that the Road Commission is going to discourage long straight roadways. This will help with speeding and cut through problems. Trustee Such asked, again, that the Township be allowed some flexibility as the new standards are being adopted.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Meridian Township Resident Joyce Harding, 1044 Haslett Road, Haslett, said she lives on the portion of Haslett Road that is being reconstructed this summer. She said that sometimes it is very difficult to back out of her driveway onto Haslett Road. Once it is narrowed to one lane with a bike lane, it will be even more difficult. Ms. Harding said that while she realizes that the intent is to slow traffic through the downtown area, there is an ever-increasing volume of traffic through this area with all of the new development to the east. Ms. Harding asked if it just would not be easier to have the police patrol the area and slow the traffic that way.

Road Commission Chair Larry Smith stated this is such an oxymoron because the township officials want narrower streets and the residents want wider streets. This is the dilemma faced by the Road Commission. The same situation can be said of Wood Street in Lansing Township. The residents want slower traffic, no trucks and double yellow lines for no passing, yet when the new mall opens in the fall, people will have a lot of difficulty getting out of their driveways. Yet, if the traffic is slower, they will never get out! Again, the Road Commission faces this difficulty between township officials and residents.

Meridian Township Manager Jerry Richards stated that the traffic carrying capacity on three lanes would be similar to four lanes. The difference is that there will be a center turn lane. Mrs. Harding stated the problem on Haslett Road would be with trying to back out of her driveway. She said she does not have room enough for a turn around so that she can drive straight out of the driveway. Mrs. Harding feels that with one lane of traffic and a bike lane, it will be very difficult finding a space in traffic to back out, as well as room enough for her to maneuver backing out.

Meridian Township resident Carl VanDommelen, 2100 Tamarack Drive, Okemos, asked if federal funds were being used on the Haslett Road project. Road Commission Chair Larry Smith said yes. Mr. VanDommelen asked what influenced the Road Commission in seeking federal funding. Director of Traffic and Safety stated the Road Commission tried for four years to obtain the funding for this project. It would have taken a lot longer to fund the project from Road Commission funds because it would not have been a high priority project. There are other areas in the county that need work.

Meridian Township Trustee Andy Such stated this came about because of several accidents involving children. The Road Commission held a charrette, which was a meeting of various Road Commission and Township officials, as well as residents, to discuss and decide what the solution would be for the problems encountered along this portion of Haslett Road. This meeting took an entire day, which was also attended by a world-renowned engineer known for his work in traffic calming design. After this meeting, the engineer developed a plan for the reconstruction of Haslett Road and it has been on the list ever since waiting for funding. This is clearly a safety issue. It has been a long process with a lot of planning and, in the long run, it will be worth it even if you do have to wait a little longer to get out of your driveway. Trustee Such stated that he would also like to see a roundabout at Green Road and Haslett Road.

Mrs. Harding stated she never saw any notices in the paper about the meetings that took place regarding Haslett Road. Trustee Such stated they were published in the local papers about four years ago when the meetings took place.

Mr. VanDommelen asked if this is what the Road Commission did on Grand River Avenue. Director of Traffic and Safety Dave Sonnenberg said no; it was MDOT. The Road Commission does not have jurisdiction over Grand River Avenue. That is a state road. However, he did state that this type of design from four lanes to three has been done in Delhi Township on Holt Road and on Willoughby Road. Holt Road has more residences on it than Haslett Road does, and it seems to be working out well. Mrs. Harding asked if there were bike lanes on these roads. Mr. Sonnenberg said yes.

Delhi Township Manager John Elsinga stated a long-term strategy is needed to identify additional funding for local roads other than millages.

Road Commission Managing Director John Midgley stated that everyone is concerned with this issue. The price of gas keeps fluctuating. There really needs to be another gas tax increase that should be set up so that it goes up automatically with the economy. The whole issue needs to be addressed by the State. Road Commission Chair Larry Smith stated the townships, road commissions and county boards all need to be in on the same page regarding this issue.

Delhi Township Engineer Bob Scheuerman stated the township has held special assessment hearings and they do not have anyone show up. He said the township does a fifty percent (50%) assessment. The township initiates the road work and does the petitions itself. When the residents have to pay \$200-400 for road repairs, they just do not care. Mr. Scheuerman said they do the same thing on their sidewalks. The residents pay fifty percent (50%) and the township pays fifty percent (50%) percent.

Mr. Scheuerman suggested that the three (3) township engineers/staff meet with Bob Peterson on a quarterly basis to discuss what is going on in the townships. He said he thought this would be very helpful.

Road Commission Board Member Jean McDonald stated she thought that was a very good idea because the Road Commission is the one that takes the heat for things going on in the townships. For example, all this money is being spent on improving Lake Lansing this year and next year Lansing Township is going to put sewer in and will have to perform road cuts. The residents will complain to the Road Commission about ruining brand new road.

Road Commission Board Chair Larry Smith stated the offer from Bob Scheuerman is accepted. He directed that a meeting between the three (3) townships and Bob Peterson be scheduled every three (3) months and that a report of these meetings be brought back to the Board.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Road Commission Board Chair Larry Smith thanked everyone for coming. He said we are all in this together and we all need to work together.

Chair Smith and the respective bodies adjourned their meetings at 8:45 P.M.

---

SUSAN McGILLICUDDY  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

---

MARY M. G. HELMBRECHT  
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Deborah L. Bellows, Ingham County Road Commission Board Secretary  
Condensed and revised by Paul J. Cassidy, Meridian Township Board Recording Secretary