

Village of Dexter Special Meeting  
Tuesday, April 25, 2006 6:00 pm  
Washtenaw County Road Commission Assembly Room  
Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order by President Seta and Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call and Introductions

Attendees at start of meeting:

Village Council: President Seta, Trustees Carson Cousins, Walters and Keough Fisher arrived 6:18 p.m.

Others: Ray Tell – Dexter Planning Commission, Doug Fuller – Scio Twp Transportation Committee, Sean Kelley, Pam Byrnes, Terry Blackmore - WATS, Steve Purri- Wash Co. Road Commission, Brian Shorkey – Wash Co. Road Commission Transportation Planner, Tim E. – Wash Co. Road Commissioner, Rebecca Schneider – representing Congressperson Schwartz office, Mark Ouimet – Wash. County Commissioner, John Hanifan – Assist Village Manager Dexter

C. Approval of Agenda: Motion – Carson, Support – Cousins

Yeas – Carson, Cousins, Keough, Walter, Seta Nays - None

D. Non-arranged Participation: None

E. New Business – Consideration and Discussion of:

1. Discussion of: Long Term Washtenaw County Road Commission Plan for Dexter Area

President Seta provided an overview of the Village action from April 24, 2006 and passed out copies of the potential Main Street Bridge agreement that the Village Council passed by a 6 to 1 vote. The agreement includes Village participation of \$219,000 based on the estimated project costs, with a look back provision that if implemented, limits the Villages ultimate exposure to 50 % of the local costs, not to exceed \$400,000.

President Seta expressed 4 common alternatives that have been recently mentioned at one time or another to solve the north south traffic problems, including 1) new 3-lane viaduct, 2) Bypass to Parker Road, 3) Extending Dexter Townhall Road, or 4) Improving Dancer Road. President Seta asked the Road Commission, “What is the long term plan for Washtenaw County to address north south traffic?”

Steve Purri explains that a new 3 lane viaduct and the bridge have been estimated to cost \$11 million dollars. The cost estimate was prepared by the County’s past consultants and includes approximately \$3.2 million for the bridge and over \$7 million for the 3 lane viaduct. The County

received a \$5.5 million grant through the critical bridge program. Steve explained that the County attempted to secure additional funding by writing a letter to Congressperson Schwartz office and through the Federal Aid Committee, but did not have any success. Their conclusion is to deal with the bridge now and the viaduct in the near future.

Paul Cousins asked how MDOT limits in any way the way the \$5.5 M can be used. The County (Brian S.) read a paragraph from a Nov. 4, 2005 letter from Mark Harrison of MDOT, essentially earmarking the money for the new bridge, dam removal, related approach work, but not anything to do with the railroad viaduct. Funding is essentially capped at what is needed for the above described items. Unused moneys will remain within the critical bridge program.

President Seta asked "What is the road commission priority for the future?" Is the viaduct the Road Commission's priority?

Tim E. (Wash Co Road Commissioner) answered that the future ROW plan shows Parker Rd to Island Lake Road (Bypass), but he does not think it is a solid plan, although he can't speak for the other commissioners. Tim further explained that he thinks the Bridge and Viaduct are the No. 1 priority.

President Seta shared verbiage from a resolution that was past by the Village, Dexter Twp, Webster Twp and Scio Twp in support of "preserving the rural character, protect wetlands, etc." of the area, among others. Tim E. was happy to hear about the resolution and requested a copy of the resolution, suggesting that it almost went so far as to say "we don't want a bypass".

Paul Cousins took us back to 1996, recalling a vote by the WCRC to concentrate on the Main St. Bridge/Viaduct at that time. It is now 10 years later and we are still in the same position.

Tim E. asked if the surrounding Townships are in support of the bypass or not? Jim again referred back to the resolution that had been passed by all of the aforementioned communities.

Ray Tell asked if an improved Dancer Road corridor was on the future ROW map. Steve, Tim and Terri (WATS) all answered, "Yes, they think so."

Pam Byrnes switched gears and asked what the railroads position is in all of this? Steve Purri answered that the railroad is not eligible for critical bridge money, however, the existing stone train bridge (viaduct) works for them. Pam further asked when the last time the WCRC spoke with the railroad. Brian S. answered that they had just spoken with Tina Hissong (spelling ?), the MDOT connection to the railroad, in the last day or so. John Hanifan asked about direct contact with the railroad. Brian reported no direct contact with the railroad (Norfolk Southern) in quite a while.

Steve Purri reaffirmed that the road commission can not just freeze any remaining critical bridge money for the future, but would have their consultants design for as many improvements as possible to the new bridge approaches (Dexter Chelsea, etc..) would be made in phase 1 and that the design would have considerable thought and planning of how phase 1 would fit with phase 2.

Shawn Keough shared his recent experience with the CSX railroad in Plymouth during the planning of a Wayne County Grade Separation project and encouraged the road commission to

establish contact with the railroad, and maintain consistent contact with them, because they won't call the road commission. Keough also suggested that the phase 2 design should be done concurrently with Phase 1 so that the two project timelines (phase 1 and phase 2) overlapped rather than went back to back. This would also help identify any ROW needs for both projects earlier and start that process rather than extend the project timelines.

Pam mentioned that she had made contact with the Government Affairs person and offered to help in that regard if she could with respect to communication with the railroad.

Rebecca also offered support for communication with the railroad.

There was general agreement from everyone in the room that a new Viaduct/Main St. Bridge concept was the priority for the Dexter area. Steve Purri indicated construction on Main St. Bridge was planned for 2008; the viaduct timing is still to be determined, pending funding availability.

2. Discussion of: Comprehensive Funding Plan for entire Main Street Bridge Project, including dam removal, bridge replacement and other project elements

Paul Cousins said that he is pleased with the Road Commissions position that they agree the Bridge/Viaduct is the priority rather than the bypass. Paul asked if there was any way that the entire \$5.5 M could be spent rather than just the \$3.2 needed for the new bridge. Paul explained his "bowl scenario" for the area between the bridge and the viaduct, encouraging the road commission to fill the bowl as much as possible.

Steve reiterated that the WCRC must justify what gets built.

Keough asked if the WCRC could get started on ROW acquisition as soon as possible, as this was a long lead item, given the process. Steve indicated that the phase 1 design would identify the needed ROW and that they would have to follow appropriate procurement procedures consistent with County and State process. Steve concurred that pursuing it would be a priority once the limits of what is needed are confirmed.

President Seta indicated the Huron River Watershed Council as going to be getting sediment sampling shortly and that we should understand have analysis results by mid June.

Lots of general discussion about what the grant money could be used for. Approaches – how far back? Critical bridge money cannot be used for ROW purchases.

President Seta asked if the WCRC had \$12 Million, would the approaches west of the railroad count as an eligible approach cost. Road Commission said that if MDOT had included the viaduct as part of the eligible cost, then yes, but since they did not, no it would not be eligible.

Back to exploring available funding options, Terri from WATS described the Urban Project Meetings and that there may be some money available through WATS. The Village got approximately \$300,000 for Dexter Ann Arbor Road during the 2005 process. Terri encouraged the Village to attend these meetings and speak up for the projects that they feel are important. Village asked if they had been there, was there \$7 million available for the viaduct? The next

round (2006) of committee meetings for this years funding have not been set up yet (did I hear this right?).

Safe Routes to School funding and congestion mitigation funding were brought up as a possible ideas for funding to apply for the viaduct, but the general consensus was that there was not money available for this type of project from these sources.

Rebecca offered that the next round of appropriations request could include a request for funding, but the past request did not for include the viaduct on the list from the WCRC.

The next transportation bill will start with a call for projects in 2007. Terri encouraged the Village and Road Commission to approach the Urban Planning Committee to see if they could get “foot in the door” for some initial funding, which would make it easier to ask for more.

Mark Ouimet has talked with other commissioners about this issue and isn't sure if an additional millage or bond proposal would pass or be supported.

Paul Cousins reiterated that he doesn't want to “give any money back to the state”.

No one seems to understand the basis for MDOT selecting \$5.5 M as the amount granted.

Steve Purri asked that the Village identify a person to participate in the consultant selection process.

Keough asked if perhaps the railroad would contribute money toward a new viaduct if we offered to close an existing railroad crossing (Broad Street for example).

There were general comments that this was a good meeting. We need to keep communicating and keep our focus on the goal of completing both phases.

F: Council Comments: None

G. Non-arranged Participation: None

H. Adjournment: Motion – Keough, Support – Fisher

Yeas – All, Nays - None

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawn Keough, Trustee

Approved for Filing: May 8, 2006