

Public Hearing of the Board of County Road Commissioners for the County of St. Joseph, State of Michigan, was held at the Flowerfield Township Hall, 12020 M-216, Marcellus, MI at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Eric Shafer, Commissioner Jack Coleman, Clerk Julie Mayuiers

Staff Members Present: John Lindsey, Managing Director
Garrett Myland, Assistant Manager/Engineer

Guests:

Robert & Paula Proffitt 50321 Creglow Road, Marcellus, MI 49067, 269-845-9523,
grnwytych39@yahoo.com

Richard P. Cripps, 50528 Chamberlain Road, Marcellus, MI 49067, 269-535-2868

Ron Shaver, Flowerfield Twp. Supervisor, 13897 Flowerfield Road, 269-330-4933, rshaver2@aol.com

David Bohan 50691 Creglow, 269-377-6138

Don & Linda Bogema, 9276 Z Ave, Marcellus, 269-271-1982

Deb Spencer, 52986 Chamberlain Road, Marcellus, 269-718-9047

Jessie Frey, 50115 Creglow Road, Marcellus, 269-679-2040

Betty Grindel, Flowerfield Township Trustee, 13826 M-216, Marcellus, MI 269-279-9888

Leo Starks – Visitor

Susan Farrell, 12120 Flowerfield Road, Marcellus, MI 269-532-0311

Kris Foondle, MDOT Office of Rail, 734-657-1626 FoondleK@michigan.gov

Doug & Dawn Houser, 50627 Creglow Road, Marcellus, MI 269-251-5462

Jason Gardella 50380 Creglow Road, Marcellus, MI 269-506-0940 Jcardella@wwilliams.com

Joe Frey 50015 Creglow Road, Marcellus, MI 269-679-2040 freyhealth@aol.com

Commissioner Shafer – This meeting is to discuss the *option* of closing the railroad tracks on County Line Road in Flowerfield Township in exchange for the hard surfacing of County Line Road and Creglow Road from Chamberlain Road to Flowerfield Road.

Ron Shaver – This is not up to the township to say how this goes, it is the road commissions decision because the roads belong to the road commission, we are just hosting the meeting.

Commissioner Shafer called the meeting to order. The pledge of allegiance to the American Flag was given and he introduced himself and Commissioner Jack Coleman.

John Lindsey introduced Garrett Myland Assistant Manager, Kris Foondle MDOT Office of Rail and Julie Mayuiers Clerk of the Road Commission Board.

John then thanked Flowerfield Township for hosting the meeting tonight. This is a meeting of SJCRC Board at Flowerfield Township. Thank you Flowerfield Township for all the good work we've been doing on road issues.

Why have a Public Hearing? Michigan law requires a Public Hearing for certain road changes. Kris Foondle, Garrett Myland, Canadian Railroad, and I met at the railroad crossing last year because of the need to address the safety of installing rail crossings. While there for the 20 – 30-minute meeting, only one car crossed the tracks. (It is said) the safest crossing is no crossing.

John and Garrett provided Kris the dollar amount to hard surface the roads and close the railroad crossing. Hard surface takes many layers of chip seal and is not the same as HMA roads. The recent

paving on Day Road this past summer is an example of a hard surface chip seal road. St. Joseph County is 81% hard surfaced roads. In the 1980's the road commission hard surfaced more roads than they could maintain.

The Public Hearing is to hear from the citizens what they want. There are expenses to maintaining hard surfaced roads of approximately \$20,000 every 7 years to reseal.

Kris Foondle – Thank you for hosting the meeting and the citizens for attending tonight. No decisions have been made to date. We are here to provide all the information needed to make that decision.

Back to last summer, his office is responsible for railroad crossings and to make them safe. They look for the most successeptical to crashes because it costs \$300,000 - \$400,000 to install lights and gates at each crossing. There is joint meeting with the railroad companies, MDOT and road commissions to review the locations. Stop sign crossings are more likely to have accidents. Z Ave/County Line Road crossing made the list of the top 30 roads to receive funds for crossing arms/lights. The program could offer lump sum cash to the road commission if voted to permanently close the crossing. Even with lights and gates, people still go around, and accidents happen. The road commission has outlined to hard surface roads and install cul-de-sacs is beneficial. The closure of the crossing will make folks have to take another route to get to the other side of the closed crossing when a road is closed. ACT 51 money is given to the road commission and the road commission is required to spend it on transportation needs in their district. Railroads also give the road commission a cash incentive and the Feds make a matching cash donation to help. Total the road commission receives should be more than sufficient to close crossings and hard surface roads and to seal the road 7 years later.

Garrett Myland – we are required to do something at the crossing either we install gates, or we close the road.

Frey – There have been zero accidents at that crossing. What is the closest crossing that does not have any arms?

Foondle – One in Cass County, which doesn't have arms. We have to prioritize based on the risks of the 4,647 crossings in the state and 2,450 have active warning devices. The goal is to get to these as quickly as possible.

Frey – Canadian National?

Foondle – It's Grand Central a subsidiary to Canadian National

Frey – Kick them out. Were these roads going to be asphalted before?

Lindsey – Never. We can't hard surface any more roads until we fix the ones we have. In the 1980's Flowerfield didn't have many hard surfaced roads. It takes a 50/50 match to hard surface roads.

Frey – If it goes to paved road who holds the liability when the fire department or ambulance can't make it to his house? He will make the road commission liable if this happens. He has had 5 – 6 cars chewed up by the dust control. He pays taxes to the middle of the road and should have a say in this matter.

Lindsey – If you don't want dust control applied in front of your house notify the township. It is a quality of life for people that live on the road.

Proffitt – How far back from the center of the road will trees be cut back?

Lindsey – Not 33' but a safe distance back. Some trees will have to come out. There was money spent on Day Road tree removal.

Proffitt – One way out for ambulance?

Lindsey – Trees on west side of Creglow will need to be cleaned up a bunch and hope we would improve with the drifting by doing so. You can't get taxed more because of the road being hard surfaced only the value of your property increases.

Foondle – He lives on a dead-end road, and they are great...no traffic.

Proffitt – He can see both the pros and cons of a dead-end road with snowstorms and drifting.

Cripps – He farms $\frac{3}{4}$ or the area on the road we are closing. He has drying bins there and this would create more miles for him to get to his drying bins. He owns all the millions of walnut trees on the road and not happy to cut them down.

Frey – Those trees help with the drifting.

Cripps – Don't think we have a good decision yet. Going to create an area on the west side by the tracks for dumping and poaching. Close the road at the last house and put a gate up to Bogeman's house. Wiley's barn is close to the tracks so he would need access.

Bogeman's – We don't mind a gate being installed at all.

Shaver – He doesn't believe a lot of trees were removed when Day Road was paved.

Lindsey – We don't want people to leave the meeting thinking we are taking down all the trees. Dick, they are your trees, and you should get someone to harvest them since they are walnut.

Josiah Kosacok – This is a great instance of government tyranny – keep fixing it until it's broke. He doesn't want to hear any complaints about bad government.

Houser's – We are in favor of closing it. If closed and a cul-de-sac put in for busses, garbage trucks, plows etc.

Lindsey – It would be a 90 – 125' diameter radius turnaround. Garrett has all the guidelines to ensure busses, garbage trucks, etc. can get turned around.

Bogema – We are for it. They understand what it imposed on Dick Cripp because of his farming. People fly by their house now and they are the only house on that stretch of road. They would rather not have it open.

Lindsey – The easy option would be to tell MDOT to put up the crossing arms.

Frey – Not having traffic go by would make vehicles have to drive further north.

Bogema – The road commission is doing an excellent job of plowing and the ambulance was able to make it to their house.

Lindsey – The Covered Bridge just outside of Centreville is a perfect example of this issue. The bridge is not high enough for ambulances or fire trucks to go through, so they must take Angevine to get to the north side of the bridge. These residents on this road are serviced by Marcellus Fire Dept.

Cripp – If they put in a cul-de-sac, it would probably be where he has property and a barn.

Lindsey – We would do a calculation of the property value and work with owners for the most practical working way of installing the cul-de-sac.

Myland – There are different ways to swing the cul-de-sac.

Farrell – Lives on Flowerfield Road but rides her horse on Creglow Road and appreciates having the roads to ride on but worried about the crashes with additional farm equipment on main roads and considers this a dangerous option.

Frey – There is a person who has a barn in the field and can see if there is anyone down there partying.

Spencer – Member of the township board. One reason for dust control is respiratory conditions and the dust control helps with that. If we don't pave it now it will probably be a really long time before it is paved. She is new to the board and this past year they paved 2 roads and her brother lives on Day Road and the road was really bad. She can see where it can be an inconvenience but also a lot of good things. Sounds like a lot of why we shouldn't do versus why we should.

Voting to make it the best for the community. Dick Cripp has letters from people opposing the closing.

Cardella – In favor of the crossing arms. Paperwork says any manipulations to a road would affect property value. Cul-de-sac will quadruple traffic. Trash thrown out more, postal workers are not in favor of as they would have to re-work all their routes. MDOT has to be here to listen to citizens comments.

Bohan – I'm probably the least inconvenienced here but I support the project. Safety is the standard point. The railroad crossing contains a lot of chemicals and the likelihood it happens would cause a lot more issues.

Foondle – Unfortunately too many motorists think a stop sign is just a suggestion. These types of crossings you have no idea what type of chemicals those train cars are carrying. Very difficult to determine unless you can read the train cars.

Frey – The same train goes across other crossings. He's in favor of the arms, not closing it.

Cripp – Concerned with the chemicals. He has seen 2 derailments in his lifetime without being caused by an auto accident.

Shaver – He has a letter from a property owner Larry Wiley voicing approval to close the crossing. He owns property on the southside of the crossing.

Frey – Lance Wiley, Larry's son doesn't like the idea and he knows of one other person who owns property on the road, and they are not in favor either but not here tonight.

Lindsey – Like I said, no decision will be made tonight, but we appreciate your opinion.

Frey – It should be up to the homeowners on Creglow, and the gravel roads and their opinions should value the most. Let's have a roll call vote tonight.

Lindsey – Not tonight, it is not up to the citizens but the Road Commission Board to decide. I'm reading it about 50/50 tonight. You are welcome to come to a road commission board meeting anytime and speak during citizens comments. They are held the 1st and 3rd Wed. of the month. But the road commission has the final decision.

Foondle – There is still a bunch of paperwork to be done.

Myland – Nothing would take place until 2023 anyways, we don't have the manpower either. If it goes to lights and gates, it would be late 2023 project. Closing and paving would be done at the same time. Road commission has six months from last October to make a decision.

Chairman Eric Shafer – We would like to have you present at the board meeting when a decision is going to be made. We will let Ron Shaver know and he can post it also.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm

Eric B. Shafer, Chairman

Julie Mayuiers, Clerk of the Board
