

EATON COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 17, 2016

A special meeting of the Eaton County Board of Road Commissioners was held at their office in Charlotte, Michigan on May 17, 2016.

Members Present: Commissioners Maxwell, Eldred, Lamoreaux, Tennis

Members Absent: Commissioner Lyons

Vice Chair Eldred called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

Moved by Tennis, second by Lamoreaux, that the agenda be approved as printed. Motion carried.

Engineer-Manager Ballou welcomed attendees and introduced representatives of the groups and organizations present.

Mr. Ballou gave a brief description and history of Five Point Highway.

Sharon Kubica, representative of the Five Point community, gave a presentation detailing their concerns about Five Point Highway at the swamp.

Delayed by another business engagement, Chair Maxwell joined the meeting and reminded attendees to hold questions until presentations were complete.

Stu Kogge and Scott Isenberg, GEI Consultants, spoke on behalf of the Eaton County Drain Commissioner, about their progress with the Brown Drain, noting that they are in the process of completing the application for a permit to relocate the Drain.

Kevin McDevitt, Mannik & Smith Group, reviewed the feasibility study performed by his firm in July, 2015.

Brady Harrington, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, reported on his agency's work on an aquatic habitat grant to improve the Battle Creek River.

Brian Gunderman, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, reported on the work his agency has done and is doing relative to the Battle Creek River and the Brown Drain.

Greg Minshall, Eng., Inc., discussed his organization's involvement with the aquatic habitat grant.

Jim Watling, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), discussed his agency's structure and involvement with work being done in the area.

Richard Wagner, Eaton County Drain Commissioner, revisited the efforts of the Drain Commission to relocate the Brown Drain.

Steve Capps, Carmel Township Supervisor, reported on Carmel Township's involvement and addressed his concerns with Five Point Highway.

Richard Heisler, Walton Township Supervisor, spoke to Walton Township's involvement.

Kent Austin, Eaton County Commissioner, expressed his support for the relocation of the Brown Drain.

Wayne Ridge, Eaton County Commissioner, presented his concerns with Five Point Highway.

Chair Maxwell thanked those that presented information and opened the meeting for public comment.

Carl Gallihugh, 19675 T Dr N in Calhoun County, spoke regarding his concerns about wetlands in general.

Frank Kita, 520 W Five Point Highway, questioned why there are no load limits on Five Point Highway at the location under discussion. Mr. Ballou responded that the settlement of the road is not due to traffic that passes over the road so much as it is due to the static weight of the road.

Jim Smith, 2858 W Five Point Highway, questioned whether the Road Commission contacts fire departments when the road is closed. Mr. Ballou responded that Eaton County Central Dispatch is notified every time a road is closed.

Ms. Kubica questioned whether wetland mitigation would require restoring the wetland to its current size or to the smaller size it was many years ago. Mr. Watling responded that it would likely need to be restored to its current size.

Jerry Frazier, 1188 W Five Point Hwy, noted that he has observed fully loaded semi trucks stuck on Five Point Highway for a week at a time, so there are times when the road carries more weight than usual.

Tim Hine, 1766 W Five Point Highway, questioned whether a plan will be developed. Chair Maxwell responded that the Road Commission is sincerely listening and accumulating all information before moving on to the next section of the agenda, and that the Road Commission is not the only agency involved in the issue.

Mr. Smith requested that emergency measures be taken immediately to address safety issues.

Mr. Gallihugh expressed doubt that emergency measures would be effective.

Jeff Elston, 1650 W Five Point Highway, questioned what the impact to the bridge would be if the Brown Drain is relocated. Mr. Ballou responded that the existing bridge is well grounded and would not be impacted.

Chair Maxwell turned the meeting over to Mr. Ballou to discuss short- and long-term goals.

Mr. Ballou reiterated that the Drain Commission is pursuing a permit to relocate the Brown Drain. This process may allow the Road Commission to place temporary culverts to widen the crossing, and to resurface the area that has been under water. This short-term goal could be done this construction season but does not provide a long-term fix.

Mr. Ballou noted that a medium-term goal would be to continue to work with the agencies and residents, but funding is indeterminate.

Mr. Kogge stated that more time is needed regarding the drain relocation, to talk with property owners and to see what the US Environmental Protection Agency will do. He noted that he expects to have the permit application submitted to the DEQ within the month.

Mr. Capps requested that a multi-agency project plan be developed.

Chair Maxwell offered the Road Commission as a facilitator, and to provide better communication regarding the status of Five Point Highway.

Mr. Kita questioned what would happen to the old culvert if the Road Commission were to place new culverts. Mr. Ballou responded that Road Commission staff has been in discussions with Mr. Watling regarding the issue, but does not want to unnecessarily remove the culvert. The goal would be to leave the culvert, fill it in to restore the original footprint of the road.

Mr. Frazier and Mr. Kogge discussed the possible design of a relocated Brown Drain.

Carol Hine, 1766 W Five Point Highway, inquired as to the orange markers currently on the road that are broken or missing. Mr. Ballou responded that they were recently replaced and are considered temporary.

Commissioner Lamoreaux inquired whether the Road Commission had the authority to lower the speed limit in the area. There was discussion.

Ms. Kubica suggested the Road Commission prioritize road needs in the county and inquired whether it is possible to develop four or five solutions at various price points so plans would be ready if funding were to become available.

Chair Maxwell and Mr. Ballou discussed the ways in which the Road Commission plans and prioritizes projects. Mr. Ballou noted that when investigating the local road millage, the cost to bring all primary roads in Eaton County to good condition was approximately \$168 million. There was discussion.

Tim Starr, 1191 W Five Point Highway, suggested that an oversight committee would be a good idea.

There was discussion regarding communications, signage, speed limits, funding.

Chair Maxwell assured the audience that the Road Commission will continue to work on solutions to Five Point Highway and suggested Road Commission staff can send a quarterly status email to interested parties.

Ms. Kubica thanked Chair Maxwell for arranging the meeting and feels there is commitment.

Charlene Shumaker, 4808 S Lacey Lake Road, expressed concerns regarding the pavement dropping off on the sides of the road and suggested cement partitions be placed. Mr. Ballou responded that it is something the Road Commission can look at, but could also become a hazard. There was discussion.

Mr. Ballou thanked the representatives from the various organizations and agencies that were present for their participation.

Moved by Lamoreaux, second by Eldred to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 pm. Motion carried.