

Mr. Pearson also stated that the sign truck went to paint this week, so that piece of equipment should be delivered soon also. Mr. Pearson explained that one of the patrol wings was damaged when it caught a piece of raised asphalt. At this time the wing has been removed and will be repaired when time is available.

Engineering Report:

Mr. Mainz asked the Board to approve the Haul Route for Mr. Alex Hummel.

022410-018

Motion by Mr. Duckert, seconded by Mr. Suma to approve the Haul Route renewal for Mr. Alex Hummel for Clear Lake Road. Roll Call: Duckert, aye; Hodge, aye Suma, aye. Three ayes. Motion carried.

022410-019

Motion by Mr. Suma, seconded by Mr. Duckert to approve overnight lodging for Mr. Mainz to attend the Bridge Conference in Big Rapids for Monday, March 22, 2010. Roll Call: Duckert, aye; Hodge, aye Suma, aye. Three ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Mainz went on to state that there would be grade inspection meeting for the Kamax project scheduled with MDOT.

Mr. Mainz then gave a brief description of the High Risk Rural Road Program, the requirements and funding matches. Mr. Mainz spoke about the 17 crashes from 2003 to 2007 on Pratt Road and the three that were reported as incapacitating. Mr. Mainz explained that 11 of the crashes were with a fixed object, 10 of them with trees. Mr. Mainz went on to explain that there will be centerline corrugations through the S-curves, upgrading of signs, tree removal and centerline paint pavement marking.

Public Comment:

Mr. Robert Hartwig, 3830 Hadley Road

Mr. Hartwig inquired as to how many of the crashes were due to alcohol. Mr. Mainz explained that the Road Commission cannot control the capacity of the driver, but we can attempt to improve the driving conditions.

Mr. Hartwig stated that one resident has three sugar maples marked to be removed, yet they were at the top of an incline which is virtually impossible to hit with a vehicle. Mr. Mainz explained that the requirements for the grant are specific and modifications could jeopardize the funding.

Mr. Hartwig stated that one of the residents have sugar maples that actually protect their home.

Mr. Mainz explained that with the removal of the trees, the motorist will have more time to get their vehicle under control.

Mr. Duckert stated that roads which are shaded will keep the ice on the roadway longer than if the sun is able to melt it, and cause drivers to lose control and skid off of the roadway.

Mr. Hartwig went on to state that there are no damage marks on the trees and he still doesn't understand why they have to be removed. Mr. Hartwig also spoke about a large tree west of Green Corners that is at least 150 years old and has never been hit by a car.

Mr. Richard Brandt, Hadley Township Trustee

Mr. Brandt stated that he believed that a lot of these identified crashes have probably been taken care of with the previous road improvement on the curve. Mr. Brandt went on to state that he did not want to see the trees cut. He stated that the trees had been there a lot of years and have not been a problem until the money came along.

Mr. Mainz stated that when funding becomes available, it is his responsibility to identify problem areas that can be improved.

Mr. Brandt went on to state that had Pratt Road been resurfaced as originally scheduled, maybe it wouldn't be a High Risk Rural Road.

Mr. Brandt later stated that after reviewing the report, he stated that the majority of the accidents happened between January and March, which would indicate slippery roads. Mr. Brandt stated that it appears to be driver error. Mr. Brandt stated that a fatality may never occur on the roadway, and if the trees are cut we may never know.

Mr. Pearson stated that in the early 1990s the Road Commission was involved in a lawsuit in which a drunk driver hit a tree on Casey Road and the suit was settled for \$600,000. Mr. Pearson stated that he agrees that drivers need to take responsibility for their actions, but that is not happening so we have to make improvements when the opportunities arise. Mr. Pearson stated that he would be remiss not to.

Mr. Brandt once again stated that you are trying to remove risk that you cannot predict.

Mr. Hodge replied that in his opinion, we have to stick to the policy that we have implemented.

Mr. Chris Tipper, 4789 Fox Lake Road

Mr. Tipper asked about the ten percent funding requirement and who was responsible for that. Mr. Pearson explained that since Pratt Road is a primary road, so it was the responsibility of the Road Commission.

Referring to the report provided by Mr. Meinz, Mr. Tipper asked about specifics regarding crash location and crash severity.

Mr. Tipper went on to state that only three injury accidents in four years have occurred, and he doesn't see that as a high priority road.

Mr. Hodge stated that although this may not be high risk in your mind, but it meets the standards of the funding agency or MDOT.

Mr. Tom Angellotti

Mr. Angellotti stated that although there hasn't been a fatality on this stretch of roadway, that doesn't mean there never will be. Mr. Angellotti went on to state that he has seen what a vehicle looks like wrapped around a tree. Mr. Angellotti asked the Board if this tree cutting policy is being applied consistently throughout the whole county. Mr. Angellotti stated that he had 125 year old trees removed in front of his home when Daley Road was improved, and now has skid marks across his yard.

Mr. Hodge responded that it is the intent of the Road Commission to enforce the policy evenly and equitably across the county when we have the opportunity to make a road safer.

Mr. Hodge stated that the Road Commission does care about trees, but we care more about people's lives than trees. It is a fact that people do drive off of the road and hit trees, and it is our responsibility to provide safety to the traveling public. Mr. Hodge stated that unfortunately, we all pay the price for others stupidity and we try to protect them from themselves.

Mr. Kirk Mancour, 4494 Gregory Road

Mr. Mancour stated that he had a concern regarding a pond on Hegel Road that isn't shielded by a guardrail.

Mr. Meinz stated that there is another round of funding, and he would be looking at all possibilities.

Mr. Mancour asked the Board about the dead wood on the side of the road.

Mr. Suma stated that a few of the Townships have agreed to have the Ash trees removed.

Mr. Pearson stated that this is a problem that we are working on as we can, and are searching for funding to deal with the Ash tree dilemma.

Mr. Brandt stated that he and Mr. Jostock were planning to meet to talk about the dead tree removal in Hadley Township.

Mr. Duckert stated that tree removal is probably the toughest part of this job. Mr. Hodge commented that one step further, the hardest part of the job is actually when a fatality occurs that is caused by something that we had the opportunity to correct.

Mr. Gary Roy

Mr. Roy gave a brief example of the exorbitant cost of liability insurance and legal services for the County. Mr. Roy stated that these overwhelming costs make it difficult for the decision makers. Mr. Roy went on to state that what could happen in this tree situation on Pratt Road is that next year someone could hit a tree.

Mr. Roy then stated that the County Bridge Fund will stay in place for another year. Mr. Hodge expressed his appreciation for that news. Mr. Roy also stated that he would like to see coordination of the three counties in the Region V Task Force, in order to take advantage of economies of scale. Mr. Roy then asked for details regarding the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding.

Mr. Suma also expressed his thanks for the County Bridge Fund.

022410-020

Motion by Mr. Suma seconded by Mr. Duckert to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

Roll Call: Suma, aye; Duckert, aye; Hodge, aye. Three ayes. Motion carried.

Douglas Hodge, Chairman

Linette Daily, Board Secretary