

**WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF ROAD COMMISSIONERS
VIRTUAL WORKING SESSION MINUTES OF
January 19, 2021**

Present: Road Commissioners Barbara Fuller – Chair, Douglas Fuller, Gloria Llamas, Jo Ann McCollum

Board Absent: Rod Green – Vice Chair

Staff Present: D. Ackerman, C. Brochue, J. Harmon, E. Kizer, M. MacDonell, M. McCulloch, N. Peterson, C. Ryan, B. Schlack, S. Siddall

Others Present: S. Shink – County Commissioner, District 2

Roll Call Of Attendance:

Barbara Fuller, Chair – remote from Sharon Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
Rodrick Green, Vice-Chair – absent
Doug Fuller, Member – remote from Scio Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
Gloria Llamas, Member – remote from Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
Jo Ann McCollum, Member – remote from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
Sheryl Siddall, Managing Director
Matt MacDonell, Director of Engineering/County Highway Engineer
Jim Harmon, Director of Operations
Dan Ackerman, Director of Finance & IT

Gloria Llamas moved, Jo Ann McCollum seconded to approve the Working Session Agenda for January 19, 2021.

Roll Call Vote:

YEAS: D. Fuller, G. Llamas, J. McCollum, B. Fuller
NAYS: None
ABSENT: R. Green
ABSTAIN: None
Motion Carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public comment.

DRAFT TREE POLICY

Sheryl Siddall, Managing Director, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Draft Tree Policy. Sheryl provided a history of how the Tree Policy was developed and where this Draft Policy was posted including social media, WCRC website and the Sun Times News which ran an article on November 18, 2020. This policy was developed using the themes of: lack of public education, maintenance practices, public outreach, protections for legacy/heritage/champion trees and advisory committee/outside expertise. There was a total of 54 public comments submitted on the Draft Tree Policy.

Public Education

There was discussion on how to improve public education. Commissioner Barb Fuller suggested a cost analysis be done on the time and cost for staff to educate the public and how that is done.

Maintenance Practices

Sheryl Siddall stated that the Draft Tree Policy discusses environmental considerations which may restrict work on some projects at certain times of the year. Sheryl stated there is ongoing training for the crews on the various types of trees and maintenance practices. There was discussion on how the boom mowers are used.

County Commissioner Sue Shink extended her thanks to the WCRC for developing the Draft Tree Policy with a robust public engagement process. Commissioner Shink expressed some concern on how the boom mowers are used.

Commissioner Barb Fuller stated that as a former Parks Commissioner she observed there were numerous trees removed during construction of the Border to Border Trail and other non-motorized trail projects that she does not recall objections on tree removal for these types of projects.

Public Outreach

Sheryl Siddall, Managing Director, stated that we will follow the Community Engagement Policy and Procedure with respect to significant tree removal. We do attempt to notify property owners whenever possible of tree removal and ask if the property owner would like the cut wood. If we are doing significant tree removal this is normally associated with a specific road project in which the public and the townships are notified.

Protection for Champion/Heritage/Legacy Trees

Sheryl explained the criteria that is considered when working on a project where trees may need to be removed.

Commissioner Doug Fuller stated that there was discussion with legal counsel that the Road Commission cannot use federal funds to replace trees that have been cut down. There was discussion on other partnerships such as the Parks Commission providing funding for tree replacement.

Advisory Committee Expertise

Sheryl stated that there is a lack of expertise with Road Commission staff on the many species of trees. There was discussion on obtaining outside experts to provide assistance to the Road Commission on identifying tree species.

The Board agreed that staff will make appropriate changes to the Draft Tree Policy according to discussion at this Working Session and bring back those changes to the Board.

North Territorial Road/Pontiac Trail Preliminary Design

Matt MacDonell, Director of Engineering, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the North Territorial Road/Pontiac Trail Preliminary Design. This intersection is currently a 4-way stop intersection. Staff is proposing a roundabout at this intersection. Matt stated the traffic congestion in this area has increased and that any improvement will be expensive due to the location and skew of this intersection. The public perception from a recent survey was 79% liked the new Pontiac Trail/7 Mile Road roundabout and 75% favored more roundabouts along this corridor. The township supervisor is also supportive of this project. This project has been programmed with federal (rural) funds for 2022. Matt identified several benefits to a roundabout design. The construction cost estimate for this project is \$1,425,000 with a ROW acquisition cost of \$200,000 for 9 parcels equaling a total cost of \$1,625,000 dollars.

The Board agreed for staff to move forward with plans for this roundabout project.

County Commissioner Sue Shink offered her assistance in helping contact residents in this area to advise of this project and road closures during construction.

ADJOURNMENT

J. McCollum moved, G. Llamas seconded to adjourn the January 19, 2021 Working Session at 11:31 a.m.

Roll Call Vote:

YEAS: D. Fuller, G. Llamas, J. McCollum, B. Fuller

NAYS: None

ABSENT: R. Green

ABSTAIN: None

Motion Carried.

Barbara Fuller, Chair
Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners

Sheryl Siddall, Deputy Clerk
Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners