

NININGER PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING – FURLONG TRAIL CONSTRUCTION
Aug. 5, 2024

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: John Bremer, chair; Steve Boetcher; Mary Dalaska, secretary; Gary Rotty, Ted Wagner

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Karen Bremer, Bob Rotty

ALSO PRESENT: Mike Hamilton, Nininger Township attorney; Mark Schoenfelder, Nininger Township engineer

HEARING CALLED TO ORDER by Chair Bremer at 7:58 p.m.

Nininger Township engineer, Mark Schoenfelder, provided a brief review of the three options that were presented at the June 3 information meeting for reconstructing Furlong Trail. Mark stated that, after hearing input from residents and the Planning Commission, he was given direction to prepare an estimate for a hybrid approach that included Option B, some preservation work along Furlong Trail, and regrading to “flatten” the west end just north of Highway 55. The new cost estimate of \$340,000 includes the hybrid option, contingencies, and administrative and engineering fees.

CALL FOR QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

Chair Bremer opened the floor for questions, comments and discussion.

- Residents expressed concerns about the significant increase in the new cost estimate (\$340,000) and how the hybrid option came about. One resident noted that, at the information meeting in June, most residents favored Option B at \$229,000. — The Planning Commission took Option B and added the best parts of the next option to get the best job overall for the money.
- Assessment determination per property — The Planning Commission recommended to the Township Board that the township pay 50% (\$170,000) of the entire project and the remaining 50% be divided equally among the 17 residential properties (\$10,000/each) since all residents use the road and will benefit from the upgrade.
- Include cul de sac upgrade — The cul de sac is a private road and is not included in this project.
- Removing paving from Highway 55 to Highway 55 as an option — The cost as opposed to benefit couldn't be justified, the township tried to provide the best road for the least cost so paving Pine Bend Trail was dropped from the project.
- Closing Pine Bend Trail — Pine Bend Trail (north of Furlong Trail through Fischer Avenue) will be closed if approved by the Township Board at their upcoming meeting.
- Project scope — Furlong Trail, from the Pine Bend Trail intersection west to the intersection with Highway 55, will be milled, reinforced, built up (where necessary), and blacktopped with driveway tie-ins.
- Property value increase vs. assessment — All property values will increase with the road upgrade. The law requires there must be an increase in value of the property that is being assessed and the assessment must be uniform upon the same class of property assessed. All properties are homesteaded except one and that property, being in the same property class, will be assessed equally. A suggestion was made to charge the assessment by linear foot or by prorating according to use. An additional suggestion was to do a survey to determine who is using the road. Concerns were expressed that the assessment outweighed the property value

increase. A question was raised about bringing in utilities during the project to increase home value and make the assessment more tolerable. Residents would need to contact the individual utility companies regarding access.

- Expand project to include upgrading Pine Bend Trail with asphalt and bring those residents in that live along that road to bring more significant benefit to all residents. Pine Bend Trail at Highway 55 will be regraded to flatten the approach and make the intersection safer. That portion of the project will be paid 100% by the township.
- Raising Furlong Trail north of Highway 55 — The dip north of the intersection with Highway 55 can create issues when entering Highway 55 especially when the road is icy. The regrade is for the benefit and safety of residents and more cost effective during a planned construction project. The township is paying for half of the overall project and is obligated to repair the road to the proper standards for safety and long-term viability.
- Type of work needed on “upper to lower” part of hill — The engineer will look at the grade and determine what type of improvements are needed.
- If construction work is not completed this year potholes will be filled with class 5.
- Incorporate the cul de sac as a township road and include it in the project — The cul de sac is a private road and the township doesn’t have any plans at this time to add that road to the township system.

HEARING CLOSED: Chair Bremer closed the public hearing at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Mary Dalaska, Planning Commission Secretary—