



LIVONIA TOWNSHIP SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
HELD AT THE LIVONIA TOWNSHIP HALL
February 1, 2016

Supervisors present: Doebler, Hass, Hewitt, Manthei and Pool.

Staff present: Clerk/Treasurer Hammre, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Fiedler, Maintenance Coordinator Berghuis

The purpose of this meeting was to take public comment on the resident driven proposal to close a portion of the Lake Fremont minimum maintenance road to motorized vehicles.

Chairman Hewitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hewitt introduced and clarified the proposal from a group of residents that was presented to the Board on March 23, 2015 to close a portion of the Lake Fremont minimum maintenance road to motorized vehicles. Hewitt explained that the residents who presented the proposal cited issues on the road that concern them including: safety, speeding, garbage dumping, illegal activities and trespassing. The proposal suggested that by changing the portion of the road to non-motorized travel it could be safely used for walking, fishing, etc.

Hewitt explained that the Board is holding this meeting to hear the opinions of Livonia Township residents as well as interested residents of Zimmerman. Hewitt asked that residents come forward to speak, identify themselves and their address, and keep comments to about 3 minutes. He also asked that residents who choose to speak to present new opinions so that the same point is not presented multiple times.

Hewitt also explained that a decision on the future of the road does not need to be made during this meeting.

Supervisor Manthei clarified that the road will not be closed and vacated (given back) to the neighboring residents. If it is closed to motorized vehicles, it would remain the property of the Township as a non-motorized road/trail. Manthei also explained that the road will not be "tarred" as has been suggested by some residents. The cost of upgrading the road to prepare it for bituminous overlay would cost well over \$1 million, and permitting to do so by Federal, State and County authorities would likely be impossible with the surrounding wetland impact. Manthei also gave an overview of the progress and possibilities of Grams Park and how that might impact road usage in the future. He also reminded residents that the entire Lake Fremont minimum maintenance road is now closed for the winter and early spring due to the difficulty in keeping it safe and passable during the snow and spring thaw season.

Residents were at this time invited to address the Board with their opinions.

Jean Coleman, 11346 276th Ave, Livonia Resident: Coleman spoke of her use of the road for walking and fishing, and pointed out that not everyone can walk to the popular fishing spot. She brought up that there was discussion about tarring the road 30 years ago and it should have been done then. Coleman expressed that everyone, regardless of where they live, deals with the same issues that are being discussed here. She suggested that the neighbors can plant trees and erect fences to minimize problems. Coleman is not in support of closing the road.

Kathy Beedle, 11311 276th Ave, Livonia Resident: Beedle spoke of her use of the road for biking, walking, nature photography, Tai Chi, and enjoying. She said that a lot of the traffic consists of large work vehicles and cars coming through from Highway 169. Beedle indicated that she would like to see the road closed to motorized vehicles.



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Reuben Gosewich, 11719 269th Ave, Livonia Resident: Gosewich said that he walks on the road, but it is dangerous and that he has almost been hit by cars. His opinion is that the road should be a walking path, he does not want it to be used as a shortcut to and from Highway 169.

Supervisor Doebler pointed out that speeding is not limited to this particular road, dumping of garbage is not limited to this particular road, and people using the road as a short-cut is not a reason to close the road.

Jeremy Valerius, 12197 Fremont Lane, Zimmerman Resident: Valerius brought up the history of previous requests to close the road and that it has remained a road for motorized vehicles. He said that speeding, theft, etc. happens on the road he lives on as well – it happens on most roads. Valerius suggested that the concerned neighbors form a neighborhood watch to help police the area, take pictures of offender's vehicles, and pick up garbage when they see it. He stated that the road is a part of the community and shouldn't be taken away from thousands to help a few. He also stated that there was a lot of Face Book response against closing the road and mentioned use by people with physical disabilities would be eliminated if the road were closed to motorized vehicles. Valerius restated that the issues are policing issues and suggested more involvement by the nearby residents to monitor the road and contact authorities when needed.

Supervisor Hass thanked the audience for attending the meeting. Hass also pointed out that there is a Township Board Meeting the 4th Monday of every month and there is a representative and report from the Sheriff's Department at each meeting. The Sergeant who gives the report asks each month if there are any issues in the Township. This is a good time for residents to voice their concerns. Hass also stated that the classification of "minimum maintenance" does not mean minimum traffic.

Andrea Listina, 26932 117th St, Livonia Resident: Listina clarified that the group that made the proposal are not trying to get lake shore property. She discussed her fear of walking on the road due to safety issues.

Supervisor Hewitt clarified the issue of a turn-around area if a portion of the road were closed as requested because the road is very narrow.

Josh Bondhus, 26334 Terrace Dr, Zimmerman Resident: Bondhus voiced his opinion that the road should remain open to motorized vehicles, explaining that the acceptance of 4-wheelers and snowmobiles initially attracted him to the Zimmerman area. He stated that hiking and skiing should be done in Grams Park. He also supported the idea of a resident team of Livonia and Zimmerman residents to help to clean, maintain, and police the area. Bondhus also mentioned that the residents with adjoining property have removed trees from the buffer zone that give them a better view of the lake and they should replace those trees.

Jared Wildes, 27042 117th St, Livonia Resident: Wildes stated that he purchased his property because of the minimum maintenance road. He desires safety and security, the proposal is just one way to solve the problems. He enjoys fishing with his kids on the road, however he has seen problems on the road increase in the past year. He stated that he has called the Sheriff's department several times when issues arise.

Debbie Wiedrich, 11795 272nd Ave, Livonia Resident: Wiedrich said that she has called the Sheriff's office many times. She stated that the road is unsafe for walking.

Dale Rawley, 26747 Fremont Drive, Livonia Resident: Rawley stated that Fremont Drive and many other roads have many of the same issues with speeders, garbage, crime, etc. Rawley does not see the need to close the road to motorized vehicles, and pointed out that walking on any road is a risk.



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Matt Levine, 25962 140th St, Livonia Resident: Levine observed that speeding appears to be a law enforcement issue and suggested the speed limit should be changed to 25 mph. He speculated that closing the road may actually increase the problems stated by the residents proposing to close the road.

Greg Lundy, 12239 Fremont Drive, Zimmerman Resident: Lundy, who spoke from his wheelchair, said that he travels around the lake in his golf cart with his Great Dane. He said this is something he really enjoys doing, and making the road non-motorized would take that opportunity away from him. He hoped for a solution that works for everybody.

Peggy Sue Kelly, 11789 272nd Ave, Livonia Resident: Kelly stated that the issues on the road have increased in the last 1 ½ to two years. She said the proposal is to solve problems, and the resident group who wants the road closed would like to see a lot of use on the road. Kelly expressed her dissatisfaction with the Town Board when the proposal was first discussed in March, accusing the Board of “laughing them out” of the meeting when they presented the proposal at the March 23rd, 2015 Board meeting. Kelly also stated “to set the record straight” following with an explanation of why they felt it was necessary to remove 17 trees from the protected buffer zone.

Supervisor Doebler interjected that he also wanted to “set the record straight” that this Board did not “laugh you out” of the meeting.

There were some additional comments from the audience at large without the commenter identifying themselves or coming forward to speak to the Board as requested. One of the commenters stated that the Township has not maintained the road in the past ten years.

Supervisor Manthei explained that many loads of gravel have been added to the road each year to repair and maintain it and regular road grading occurs. Manthei again explained that upgrading the road beyond the limits of what it is now is impossible due to cost and wetland constraints.

Supervisor Hass explained that steps were taken after the March meeting, including cameras that have been used to catch people dumping garbage and closing the road in the winter and early spring to prevent damage by people “mudding” and destroying the roadbed. He reiterated that the Township has been taking steps to answer and solve the concerns of the group who introduced the proposal. Hass explained that the Board desires to do what is best for the public. There was also some discussion about the Grams Park Project that Sherburne County is working on. Hass assured the audience that no decisions with Sherburne County will be made without public input. He also clarified that all Township information is available to the public. The Township has a website, publishes a newsletter, and has a monthly meeting that everyone is welcome to attend.

To answer an audience question, Maintenance Coordinator Berghuis explained that trash is removed when it is seen, and they clean up all trash in collector road ditches in the spring when they are able to walk and see smaller items.

To answer an audience question, Clerk/Treasurer Hammre explained to the residents the process for closing and opening a road, which is done by resolution by the Livonia Town Board. The Township, and therefore the Township residents, would still own the road. It is technically a road even if it is classified as non-motorized.

To answer an audience question, Hewitt explained the need to close and barricade the road in the winter because we are unable to maintain it to a safely passable road. If we cannot keep it safely open and plowed, we must by Minnesota law, close and barricade it.



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Supervisor Hass explained how the Girl Scout Camp road is gated but can be opened for emergency vehicles and maintenance.

Maintenance Coordinator Berghuis spoke of the cameras showing a very strong presence of patrol cars traveling on road, day and night. He also explained that the trash on the road is very visible as there are no ditches for it to go in, garbage lands directly on the road. He also stated that the maintenance team regularly monitors and maintains the road and disposes of trash as it occurs.

Supervisor Hass suggested that if residents notice a certain time of day that illegal activities occur, to talk to the Sheriff's Department and ask for increased patrol during those times.

Supervisor Doebler reflected that he is a member of the Park Board and is generally in favor of trails. However, he desires to do what is best for the community and a lot of community members would like to see the road kept open to motorized vehicles. The Board is trying to find a solution that helps everyone.

112th Street Phase 2 project – Hass/Pool unanimous to approve quote requests for brushing/tree clearing along 112th Street Phase 2 Project area to prepare for reconstruction in 2016.

At 8:17 pm Hass moved and Doebler seconded, unanimous, to continue the meeting to the February 22 Regular Board meeting.

February 22, 2016 Chairman Hewitt reopened the Lake Fremont Minimum Maintenance Road Special Meeting at 7:34 pm. Hewitt asked for Board comments.

Manthei made a motion to close the Lake Fremont Minimum Maintenance Road to vehicles except for 4-wheelers, golf carts and motor bikes. Manthei reasoned that the road has the same issues that the Girl Scout Camp road had with rutting, garbage dumping, etc. Manthei's tally of residents who want the road closed vs those who want it open was roughly 50:50, with Zimmerman residents making up a large portion of those who want it open. Manthei also discussed the future Grams Park project, the article in the Elk River Star News, and that the winter road closure has shown no impact to the residents. He pointed out that the road will never be better than it is now due to improvement constraints in the wetlands. The motion to close failed for lack of a second.

Hass stated that his tally of residents was closer to 70:30 to keep the road open, and that the Board has taken steps to address the issues that were brought before the Town Board. He pointed out that the Grams Park Project will take a long time to accomplish. Hass recommended two additional steps to further address the issues on the road: stop signs on the road by the trail entrance from The Woods at Lake Fremont development, and making the road a one-way (west bound). Hass also pointed out that research would need to be done to address parking if the road were to be closed. Hass also stated that Sherburne County should discuss the Grams Park Project as it pertains to Livonia Township Roads before presenting to the public.

Pool recommended that the road remain open to vehicles in the summer and closed in the winter. Pool pointed out that if 4 wheelers and dirt bikes are allowed on the otherwise closed road, the problems with rutting will continue. He stated that people like to drive on the road and walk on the road.

Doebler recommends that the road remain open in the summer. Doebler stated that the problems on the minimum maintenance road are issues on all roads, and that a lower speed limit would likely not be complied with. He commented that if the road were closed to vehicles except for 4 wheelers and dirt bikes, the use by these vehicles would increase. Doebler's tally on the residents who want the road open vs closed was also roughly 70:30. Previous meetings regarding closing this road were roughly 90:10 in favor of keeping it open, and it is likely in the future that it will be closer to 50:50. Doebler agreed that making the road a one way westbound would be a good compromise. Doebler



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pointed out that funding for the Grams Park has not yet been approved, and the Lake Fremont minimum maintenance road issue will likely be revisited in a few years depending on Grams Park and resident concerns.

Hewitt's tally of resident opinion was also closer to 70:30 to keep the road open. Hewitt stated that the winter/spring closing for safety and damage prevention is good. He also liked the idea of stop signs by the Woods at Lake Fremont development trail and the suggestion for one way west bound traffic to slow down the vehicles that use the road. Additionally, further restricting weight and commercial vehicles could be implemented. Hewitt also commented that it can be difficult for some people to park and walk to the fishing areas, and the Board does not want to disenfranchise the residents who would not be able to use the road as pedestrians if it were closed to vehicles.

Doebler suggested that additional cameras and speed warning signs could also be added. Hass pointed out that he recently observed snowmobile tracks that went through the buffer zone and into garages within the Woods at Lake Fremont development. He also pointed out that the Town Board has the authority to close the road at any time if conditions warrant for safety or damage prevention.

Discussion followed about gates at the ends of the road, fishing pier potential, how resident perceptions and concerns change with time, the differences and similarities between this road and the Girl Scout Camp road, and that there is no safe pedestrian connection to the road.

Bob Gross, Livonia Township resident spoke about the need to keep the road open to vehicles so that disabled people have access. He also pointed out that past Boards have also been asked to close the road, but they have always decided to keep it open. Gross supported implementing other methods to make the road safe rather than closing it.

Hass suggested a road workshop to research and discuss the various options to improve the safety of the Lake Fremont minimum maintenance road. Meeting set for April 4, 2016 at 7:00 pm, Livonia Town Hall.

Hass/Doebler unanimous to close the meeting at 8:09 pm.

Approved this 28th day of March 2016.

Chairman or Vice Chairman

Clerk/Treasurer or Deputy Clerk/Treasurer