

MINUTES OF A MEETING AS HELD BY THE
TOWN OF AURORA PLANNING & CONSERVATION BOARD

APRIL 2, 2014

Members Present: Donald Owens, Chairman
William Adams
Timothy Bailey
Laurie Kutina
William Voss

Alternate Member: Douglas Crow
Absent/ Excused: Norm Merriman, David Majka
Also Present: David Gunner, Highway Superintendent
William Kramer, Assistant Building Inspector

Chairman Don Owens presided over the meeting which began at 7:00 p.m. at the Aurora Town Hall, 300 Glead Avenue, East Aurora, New York. William Adams led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Chairman Owens welcomed Douglas Crow to the board as a new alternate member and indicated Doug would be a voting member for the meeting.

Laurie Kutina made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 6, 2013. The motion was seconded by Bill Voss.

Upon a vote being taken: ayes - six noes - none Motion carried.

Old Business:

David Gunner, Highway Superintendent reminded the PCB of the invasive plant species discussion from the October meeting. An informational handout regarding the invasive plants in the Town has been prepared and will be sent to the Town Board for approval. At that point, it will be posted on the Town of Aurora website and the Advertiser will also run an article on the information presented. Mike Evens is available to the Town Residents in an advisory capacity only.

New Business:

Don Owens and Dave Gunner have been working on reconfiguring ditches on the right of way to minimize maintenance as well as increase safety and visibility and to evaluate the effect on soil erosion and invasive plant species. Reading Road has been identified as the experimental site, pending a discussion with the Town Board.

Don Owens indicated that permission from the residents of Reading road will need to be obtained. He also stated that we are the first town to attempt this and that Erie County Soil and Water may become involved. The Buffalo River Keepers are certainly interested in the project. Dave Gunner indicated that the reconfiguration will result in the ditches having a gentler slope, both from the road side as well as the property side. Some ditches have become deep with steep walls. A potential challenge will be that the ditch will be pushed toward the property owner's residence, within the right of way. Some residents may not agree. It will be important to educate the residents as to the benefits.

Don Owens indicated that the slope of the reconfigured ditch may reduce erosion and slumping of the side slope as well as base of the ditch. Currently, the greatest amount of sediment in the Buffalo River is from road ditches. Sediment in the Buffalo River used to be caused by farming and development. But now it is primarily due to ditch erosion.

Bill Adams asked how the residents will be educated.

Don Owens indicated that PCB members may be needed to go door to door. A general meeting or mailing may also be necessary.

Dave Gunner mentioned that a meeting between PCB members and Reading Road residents could be set up for the building at the West Falls JP Nicely Park.

Bill Voss asked if a detailed plan for Reading Road ditches would be presented to the Town Board for approval or would the Town Board be asked for approval to put the detailed plan together.

Dave Gunner indicated the intent of the discussion with the Town Board would be to get the Board's blessing of the plan as presented tonight. Work will begin on Reading Road and the ditch redesign is intended to proceed.

Bill Voss asked about how many miles of town roads there are and what estimate could be made of the percentage of open ditches in the town.

Dave Gunner indicated that there are 30 miles of town roads and he estimated two-thirds of the ditches are open ditches. He also mentioned that more town residents are putting in pipes for their ditches, as the town will handle the installation.

Dave Gunner also mentioned the difficulty of maintaining the ditch at the bend on Hubbard Road. The Highway Department had to clean it out often due to erosion. Similar to the Reading Road proposal, a couple of trees were removed and they moved the hillside back. As a result, this area hasn't needed to be ditched.

Bill Kramer asked if it would be necessary to do a water volume study on Reading Road.

Don Owens indicated that they don't want to reduce the capacity of the ditches. In certain areas, they may need the assistance of an Engineer. Many of the road ditch lengths are short.

Dave Gunner indicated they would be careful not to reduce the capacity. He also suggested taking a ride up to Reading Road to look at the area. The road is approximately 1.25 miles long and there are many smaller lots. He also stated that it may be necessary to put pipe in at certain areas, but that will be determined on a case by case basis. There has to be a strong justification for putting in pipe.

Bill Voss asked if there is an estimate for man hours on a 125' lot and if there is a cost analysis of the work.

Dave Gunner indicated that time spent per lot will vary, but a couple of hours should be enough. This is work that was already planned, so there shouldn't be an additional cost.

Bill Voss asked if there was a way for the Town to purchase pipe in bulk and give an incentive to property owners to put in pipe for their ditches. This would alleviate the problems discussed.

Dave Gunner stated that it was not legal for the Town to resell pipe in this manner.

Laurie Kutina indicated that if all the ditches were piped, the flow would increase and the water has to hit dirt eventually.

Don Owens asked if there was any further discussion.

Doug Crow stated he thought it was a good idea.

A motion was made by Douglas Crow to recommend the Town Board support the Reading Road ditch reconfiguration project. Seconded by William Adams.

Upon a vote being taken: ayes – six noes – none Motion carried.

Don Owens thanked Dave Gunner for presenting this evening. He also asked Dave to come back in a few months with feedback and updates.

Bill Voss asked if there has been further discussion with the Town Board or the Building Superintendent, Patrick Blizniak in regards to ODAs with driveways and turnarounds that are non-compliant. The specific ODA in question is one on Blakeley. Bill Voss indicated he would look into his notes to determine the exact location.

Timothy Bailey moved to adjourn at 8:11p.m., seconded by William Voss. Motion carried.

The next scheduled meeting of the Aurora Planning & Conservation Board is Wednesday, May 7, 2014.

Elizabeth Cassidy
Secretary