

Bridges and Railroad Committee Meeting APPROVED Minutes

June 16, 2014, Town Hall

Members: Charles Costanza, Tom Clouser, James Doran, Eric Kurtz, Roger Rhodes, Bernadette Slawinski, Marshall James Reeder, Jim Petsas

Present:

Charles Costanza, Tom Clouser, Roger Rhodes, James Doran, Bernadette Slawinski

Guests: Larry Schell, and Officer Kevin Hughes (In for Marshall Reeder)

1. Minutes were corrected and approved for the May meeting.
2. Jim Petsas may no longer be living in town, which will vacate his seat. Charlie Costanza and, or Tom Clouser will follow-up. If he is no longer living in town, the town council will make a new appointment to the committee.
3. Officers: An election of officers was held. Bernadette Slawinski was nominated as chairperson and she asked that there be a co-chair. Roger Rhodes was selected for co-chair and Bernadette was asked to continue with minutes. The slate was approved by the members present unanimously.
4. Train Horns: Tom Clouser, Jim Doran, and Marshall Reeder have met with the new owners of Marina Shores to coordinate efforts and funding for a 30 second, sound localization horn at the gate to address the issue of horns sounding for extended periods of time as they approach Ogden Dunes. Extended research was done in this area in 2003 and was ready for application when the Transportation Bill eliminated funding for this type of project. The information from previous studies is being used for the current project study as well as new information. The costs are estimated in a range of \$85,000 to \$100,000. Jack Eskins reported at the last meeting that grants may also be available. Tom Clouser will follow-up with Mr. Eskins regarding grant money. Tom Clouser will also continue discussions with the owners of Marina Shores to coordinate efforts in this project. The train gates are scheduled to be changed in 2015, which would indicate a need to address

the horn system at the same time. There will be a meeting with Norfolk and Western and the South Shore on July 15 with Tom Clouser, Jim Doran and Marshall Reeder.

5. Delays at train crossings including stopped trains issues: There has been an increase in the past two weeks of stopped trains at the entrance; one stop lasted for two hours between the hours of 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. There is a need for procedures for stopped trains due to safety hazards.

Areas of concern that continue: letting citizens know that gate is open when sitting on U.S. 12; issues of safety turning onto bridge from Ogden Dunes; signs indicating how to traverse the Portage and U. S. Steel properties to Ogden Dunes; directing traffic during the time that gates are down.

6. Procedures for delays at crossing currently. The Officer reported that the current procedures include: A. The officers on duty monitor trains and open crossing when they determine there will be a longer delay. B. Dispatch is notified to make emergency vehicles aware that the gates are down and to proceed to the bridge to access Ogden Dunes. Recently, they have left gate to bridge open for longer periods due to ongoing issues at the gate.

After hours: Call 762-4125 to notify dispatcher to contact Ogden Dunes Police.

Needs: Better procedures need to be developed for train crossing delays due to numerous safety issues and increased frequency of delays.

7. Emergency Plans for exiting Town:
 - a. Location of plan – there was some uncertainty of the plan location and a general lack of knowledge as to what to do in an emergency within town prior to the county assisting when the Marshall is away.
 - b. Availability of plan to community members- no access to plan currently
 - c. County has a plan in case of chemical spill or train emergency
 - d. Discussion –Mrs. Slawinski addressed the issue of only one exit in town and only the use of the railroad property road adjacent to the railroad available when there is an emergency. Concerns of town liability in case of an emergency without other solutions. Mr. Rhodes stated that if a plan has not been practiced it is not a plan. There is a need for more than one planned emergency exit in case of chemical spill, fire, explosion

etc. Members of the community need to be aware of emergency plans. More knowledge of reverse 911 plans to the community. The plan needs to be communicated to the members of the community and readily available. Looking at Boat Club Road as an option. There is a need to develop a plan and share it with the community. Members of the Town Council present were asked to assist with this. Environmental Committee will also be asked to work with a team to coordinate plans and share with the community.

8. Boat Club Road Potential

- a. Obstacles, U.S. Steel, National Park Services, City of Portage and condition of road.
- b. Solutions: Karen Tallian, State Senator, is willing to work with the Town and U, S. Steel, City of Portage and National Park Service to facilitate acquisition of Boat Club Road as an alternative exit. The town Council members will contact her to participate in discussions with the parties involved.
- c. Portage is making plans for the area and we must work with them now to get the access that is needed. New Park Superintendent may be more workable than the past superintendent.

9. Next steps:

- a. Town Council members (Tom Clouser and Charlie Costanza) will contact Karen Tallian regarding assistance with Boat Club Road.
- b. Advertise for new members – Town Council
- c. Meet with railroads- Tom Clouser, Jim Doran, Marshall Reeder
- d. Tom Clouser will check with Paul Panther regarding follow-up with Representative Visclosky
- e. Bernadette Slawinski will check with Environmental group regarding their efforts for Emergency Plans.
- f. Officer and Tom Clouser will locate emergency plans and access to Boat Club Road through the gate.

10. Next meeting discussion: August 18, 2014, 5:45 p.m., Town Hall

- a. Emergency Plans
- b. Sound Localization System of Train Horns and funding
- c. Follow-up from meetings with railroads and Marina Shores
- d. Follow-up with talks with Karen Tallian and Peter Visclosky

- e. Procedures for opening gate to bridge when blocked by trains
- f. New Members