

GLA Road Committee 4-20-2015

Can anyone who was in attendance more clearly summarize the GLA Road Committee meeting of April 20, 2015?

Topping the discussion at the GLA Road Committee meeting was the question of whether GLA should pay for ongoing road maintenance on two Park County Roads that lead into NG and SG – namely Story Road in NG and Dry Creek Road in SG. Though not discussed in detail new Road Committee member Ed Dobrowski stressed repeatedly that of all GLA's pending road projects, crack filling and seal coating on Dry Creek must be a top priority. Those who believe that GLA should maintain these two county roads rest their perspective on the fact that GLA paved these roads in the past and needs to protect its investment. Others maintain that because GLA is not keeping up with the maintenance of its own roads, it has no business spending landowner assessments to maintain county roads.

Chairman Robert Wallace read a letter from Park County that said while needed work on Dry Creek tracks their maintenance schedule for Class II roads, (pot hole filling, crack filling, alligator repairs and chip seal coating) they do not have the funds for the work. It is anticipated however that the county would fill the pot hole on Dry Creek. In the letter, the county explained that it has over 70 miles of roads that need chip sealing and only \$100,000 in the budget for this work this year, and further that seal coating costs about \$25,000 per mile. (Dry Creek has almost 2 miles of paved road.)

Noting a trend that shows some landowner groups and even some counties are choosing to let paved roads return to gravel due to serious financial limitations, a landowner said GLA may have to face the hard fact that it costs four times more to maintain a paved road than a gravel road. Road committee member Charlotte Mizzi claimed that GLA land values increased by 50% when GLA's main entrance roads were paved.

Responding to Ed Dobrowski's insistence "that Dry Creek maintenance must be a top priority for GLA", Charlotte Mizzi said, "Well then, we will just have a special road assessment!" She also speculated that GLA is expecting to receive \$10,000 in delinquent assessment income by July and that money must be used for roads.

Another landowner questioned how many landowners would actually be able and willing to pay a special assessment given that 17% are already not paying regular assessments. Ed Dobrowski showed surprise at the percentage of non-paying landowners.

Another problem to keep in mind, per long term road committee member Gerald Dubiel, is that of the unstable economic world in general. He questioned whether GLA should take on another costly road loan given this financial uncertainty and suggested instead that GLA might best work with money that could be freed up next year if the board follows landowner recommendation to pay off the current road loan by the end of this year. (There was no conversation about any financial planning for road maintenance.)

In addition to the usual spring road grading and gravel work, there are other GLA road projects. Work on Capricorn in NG – numerous cracks are failing in spite of \$17,000+ worth of work done last fall to fill them. Chairman Robert Wallace plans to ask the contractor to repair the failed work. Numerous new alligating sites have been located by a landowner on Capricorn alone, and two large alligating sites on said road need immediate repair. Repairs to the guard rail at the north entrance to NG remain uncompleted. Unplanned grading and ditch cleaning is required for Upper Gemini and Caspari Road in NG, plus a sump needs to be installed on Capricorn.

Though this committee is not authorized to accept bids or spend money on its own, discussion suggested that Paul Ranttalo (road committee member, board member and host for the meeting) will likely get the “go ahead” to do the work on Upper Gemini and Caspari and the guard rail repairs. It should be noted however the GLA board has yet to seek damages from either of the drivers who damaged the guard rail or coverage from GLA’s road insurance.

In other discussion, Park County’s RID and RSID programs were pondered as a possible source of money for GLA roads. Though tedious, both programs offer landowner associations such as GLA the option of financing and contracting with the county for road maintenance and upgrade projects provided the recipients guarantee that the roads which are improved with public money allow public access.

An announcement by Chairman Robert Wallace of an offer of \$5,000 for matching GLA road funds for High South road maintenance sparked a response from Ed Dobrowski who said “No way, our priority must be Dry Creek!” Ed went on to say High South needs to have its own road district. Charlotte Mizzi said all landowners must vote in a special meeting to force High South to pay assessments over and above the norm to manage their own portion of the SG roads. Others questioned if NG should have any say at all about what happens to SG roads as assessments allocated to road maintenance are now divided half to NG and half to SG, and each section now manages its own road affairs.

A SG landowner urged the committee to review the GLA brief in its ongoing lawsuit (found on-line at <http://www.glamontana.org/>) which she sees as potentially setting a precedent for giving landowners in High South too much road money. She speculates that under certain expected results from the latest lawsuit, High South landowners may sue the board. No further discussion regarding this topic ensued.