

GLA Road Committee Meeting 9-25-2015

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GLA's Road Committee is hoping to be on its way to improved roads depending on the outcome of a test of an eco-friendly, dust control and road stabilization product. Per action taken at their September 25, 2015 meeting held at Liberty Hall, the road committee will test a product, known as PennzSuppress, on a 100-foot section of Arcturus in SG this month.

A free 55 gallon sample of the product had already been delivered to road committee member Ed Dobrowski's home. The initial research to locate this product and negotiations to get the free sample had been done by landowner Valerie O'Connell. O'Connell claimed that the use of the product could reduce annual grading and gravel costs by as much as 80% depending on the condition of the road and the quality of initial preparation. It costs more up front and it lasts longer than other dust control and road stabilization products, O'Connell said.

A typical preparation is to gravel, grade and roll a road surface. The product, when diluted with water, is then applied with a water truck in three-steps – the first spray coat dries in an hour, a second about the same and the third completes the initial application process. Sometimes known as “quick asphalt”, further coats can be applied “down the road”. According to the company's website, the product was developed in early 1990's for dust control, and is used internationally in mines, agriculture, new construction, and by the military. It can also be used to seal-coat existing asphalt.

Acknowledging that the cost of the product is a “hard hit” up front, Road Committee Co-chair Robert Wallace, reasoned that the reduced maintenance costs down the road could make the product cost-effective. O'Connell also stated that the company would sell the product at a reduced cost to GLA as a way to get PennzSuppress known and used in this area.

When asked, Charlene Murphy, newly-appointed board member (who had the road budget figures with her) assured Wallace that there was enough money in the SG road budget to prepare a section of Arcturus for the testing. Board President Dan Kehoe, who was present at the meeting, said there was no need for the board to approve the expenditure given that adequate funds existed. Road preparations and labor for the test is expected to cost about \$1000.

GLFPC NOTE: *Discussion at this meeting appeared to be the result of conversation and plans that had taken place before the meeting and were simply reviewed and made public at the meeting.*

Assuming the test results are as anticipated, the road committee speculated how the cost of a full truckload of the product (estimated at about \$34,000) and road preparation (estimated at about \$10,000) could be shared equally by NG and SG in the spring of 2016. A truckload of product could stabilize about a mile and a third of roads for each area. Further discussion indicated that the committee might recommend a new road loan or special assessments as a way to get the funds needed to use this product.

Hearing this, a landowner asked the committee if this meant that NG would be paying for an upgrade to a SG road given that neither NG nor SG would be likely to get a road loan on their own merits. She stated the committee needs a master assessment of all roads and a master plan, as in a strategic comprehensive long-range plan, before deciding how to pay for a truck load of this new product.

Wallace reported that based on what Park County engineers have found, the best maintenance plan for aging asphalt roads is repeated crack sealing and chip sealing. When questioned about the quality of the base of Capricorn, Wallace said that per engineer William Smith, the whole of Glastonbury is one big gigantic base. Wallace said that a problem with Capricorn could be the thickness of the asphalt which is about two inches. Regular crack sealing and chip sealing will add to the thickness over time, said Wallace. Others reasoned that the lack of drainage ditches and the lack of a road crown were contributing to the crumbling of the asphalt on Capricorn and urged the committee to address those issues as well.

Paul Ranttalo explained that the base is not the problem on Capricorn because engineers will tell you there would be waves, like the ocean, on the surface of the asphalt if the base were at fault. Others reminisced that the initial blacktop in GLA was a “hell of a deal” and that while it was done on the cheap, it was thought then that future road improvements would be done when there was more money.

In related discussion, Wallace said he did not favor one landowner’s idea that all the GLA roads could be redone at once and paid for with a low-interest million dollar loan because then landowners would be assessed for the loan and for ongoing maintenance. Instead Wallace said landowners were better off just paying for asphalt maintenance like crack-sealing and chip coating year after year.

Hearing again that there is need to have drainage ditches along the asphalt in North, Ranttalo explained that the problem is no one wants to wreck their grader blade creating the ditches. To do ditches, we will have to spend the money for back-hoe work, said Ranttalo. Wallace said that ditch assessment would be part of the fall road assessment work.

Landowners who had done a recent walking inspection of Capricorn reported that bubbles are forming on the crack sealing virtually everywhere. Wallace said they would ask the contractor why that is happening.

Another attendee asked how the proposed equal cost sharing of this new product would be fair given that NG usually collects about \$8000 more a year in assessments than SG. President Kehoe said that work is underway to re-do the road policy and that the maintenance costs per mile of road is a factor in the policy updating as well as the fact that SG has more road miles than NG. Kehoe also said the present division of road funds into two pots is not legally binding, rather it is only a barometer to know what is being spent in North and South and further that what really matters is that all road policies must follow the GLA covenants.

***GLFPC NOTE:** To the knowledge of GLFPC, there has been no public board-driven initiative nor are there any minutes of any meeting that indicate GLA's road policy is being reviewed or updated. However, at other meetings, some landowners have questioned the enforceability of the current road policy given that it is not recorded at the court house.*

To address the aggregate spending and equity concerns, Murphy read from the GLA Covenants Sec. 8.01 (which she had with her). By way of a summary, Section C reads that GLA “may designate and define different qualities or levels of road construction and maintenance” based on the different terrain, weather and limited resources and equipment.

Noting the committee's lack of professional guidance on how to deal with the deteriorating roads, Murphy asked those in attendance if they were willing to do more research or possibly find a road engineer. One attendee offered to contact an engineer she knew. Reporting on a recent landowner-initiated and organized road walk on Capricorn which she attended, Murphy noted that at least three landowners had said they were willing to do more extensive road maintenance research.

At previous meetings, the road committee had considered the use of a cheaper (as much as a one-third cheaper) salt-based dust control and road stabilization product, known as Mag Chloride. However, landowner resistance, based on the committee's limited research and known various negative impacts to vehicles and to the environment, held the committee in check.

In other business, committee members Rantalo, Dobrowski, and Wallace agreed to do a road and ditch assessment before the fall grading. It was noted that while the fall roadwork is typically grading only, there may be a need this fall to gravel some high traffic roads such as Arcturus, where the gravel has washed away. It appeared that this change in service was due to Dobrowski's repeated claims that the condition of Arcturus is terrible and something must be done immediately for the 80 some landowners who regularly use this road.

Murphy urged the committee to first complete the assessment of all the roads and ditches and then determine if the best candidate for fall gravel is Arcturus.

Looking ahead to winter snow plowing, the committee approved the servicing of GLA's snow plow truck at a cost of about \$200. GLA employee Fred Counts, who is the main snow plow operator, will do the work. It was also noted that there is enough sand on hand to handle two or three large storms and that GLA still needs back-up snow plow operators.

After announcing that a new Road Committee Co-chair will be needed because he will not seek another term as a board member in November, Wallace asked Murphy if she would consider the job. Murphy declined stating that she felt a man was needed to relate to the road contractors. Ranttalo, noting that Dobrowski was friends with some of the contractors, then asked Dobrowski to take the job and he said he was interested and willing to volunteer. Wallace then clarified that the Co-Chair is appointed by the board not the road committee, and that committee appointments are traditionally done at the first board meeting after the November elections.

To complete his report, Wallace said that the guard rail repairs have been completed on the northerly entrance to NG; that the crack-sealing contract with Bailey Paving for Capricorn is set to begin in early October; and that similar work is being done by Park County on Dry Creek in SG.

Questions about the quality of the work done on Capricorn last year by the same contractor prompted Wallace to confirm that the work would be supervised this year. To further diffuse the concerns, Wallace also said the company knows that others here in Glastonbury understand that optimal air and road surface temperatures are needed for successful crack-sealing work.

There is speculation that last year's crack sealing work was done when it was too cold. Evidence for this are that some of the crack filling material lifts up easily and that the bottom side of the lifted material is mostly flat, suggesting that the material stayed on the top of the crack. Ranttalo explained that when the filler material is hot, it flows like water and goes everywhere. It fills every crack, he said.

Wallace also officially thanked landowner Claudette Dirkers for her research on asphalt road maintenance. Dirkers had emailed links to various road maintenance manuals to the committee to help the committee consider a wide range of options to maintain the deteriorating asphalt on Capricorn.

In the final consensus and wrap-up for the meeting, the committee felt that, at least for now, the plan of regular and/or annual crack sealing and seal coating is the way to maintain the deteriorating asphalt-paved roads.

GLFPC Note: As a follow up report to this summary, landowner Mark Seaver wrote the following to the GLFPC, including a PDF file of the BLM study referenced:

Here is BLM's report on a variety of "road improvement" products. Note that the one being considered, PennzSuppress, was not well liked and projected to cost twice as much

per mile as the alternate products. I sent this to Robert Wallace last week, so he's aware of this study as well.

(If any landowner would like to see the BLM report in PDF form, please email glastonburylandownersgroup@gmail.com and request a copy be emailed to you).