

Infrastructure Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2021

Members present: President Wetherbee, Harper, Cook, Frerichs
Staff present: Holton, Edmondson, Scott, Craker
Public: Laura Cavendish, Karl Wizinsky, Tom Weber, Anne Harper, Greg Noble

The meeting was called to order at 1:31pm

Approved the agenda as amended.

Public comments: We heard from Karl Wizinsky asking about Covid 19 monies and are there any available for the Village. We heard from Tom Weber on two points. First he would like to see a handicapped space and curb cut in front of the Post Office, and second he talked about the very poor conditions of South Shore Road and wondered what could be done to improve the road.

We received a report, on the streetlights, from President Wetherbee. He has been in touch with Doug DeYoung and with the crew leader who would be turning the lights back on. This is a go and should be happening soon. Trustee Harper questioned President Wetherbee asking if he discussed if we could buy and put in our own streetlights. President Wetherbee will check on this and get back to the committee.

We received an update from Jane Gale on the status of the Children's Center building.

We had a long discussion on the Fourth Street Drainage problem and the RFP's. Karl Wizinsky asked if the soil borings had been done and the answer was no. Part of the RFP's would be the soil borings. Per Machin Engineering, this would let us know where the excess water was coming from. We received a letter from Greg Noble asking for money to be set aside for this project. The letter is included in my report. Trustee Harper asked if we could put a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch plate over the existing area of concern (where a chain link fence is located) and we will have to

check into this. The question arose, did the Village set a precedent by first digging this large hole and second by putting a chain link fence over the area to cover the hole? Anne Harper had comments to make about how this project was handled very poorly in the first place. She pointed out that it has been 10 years and nothing has been done. Karl Wizinsky stated he has been keeping the screen to this area clean and he has water in his basement because of it. Chris Holton questioned whether this was the problem or is it existing ground water? Karl also wondered if the 110 year old storm drain were working , would he have water in his basement. **This whole situation needs to be resolved and will be on the Agenda again next month, hopefully with some answers.**

Chris gave us an update on the Culvert at Rose and Second Streets. We are looking at doing a box culvert in this area.

Chris also gave us update questions on our Street Ordinance.

We received a report from the DPW.

We received a report from the Planning Commission

Joni asked us for budget information. What projects need to be funded and projected costs for these projects. She will send us a project list and we will discuss these items in our January meeting.

Second Public Comments: Anne Harper wanted to congratulate Kathy Frerichs on the Planning Commissions tree projects in the Village. She also talked about the Shoreline overlay district, and the importance of this to the Village and Leelanau Township.

A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Harper and seconded by President Wetherbee. All ayes, the meeting was adjourned at 2:36pm.

**213 East Fourth Street
Northport MI 49670**

December 14, 2021

To the Northport Village Council:
(cc: Infrastructure Committee, Finance Committee)

I was gratified to note that the Village Council has discussed putting out a revised RFP for the Fourth Street drainage issue, and I look forward to seeing the language for that very soon. I would, however, like to make two additional points about the process:

First, in watching the budget review in the Finance Committee meeting on December 13, I noticed that the line item for Fourth Street drainage was essentially empty, filled only by a question-mark. I suggested to the members of that Committee that they add at least a placeholder number—\$40-50K, roughly commensurate with the allocations for other drainage and street repair projects—to provide resources for the anticipated engineering consultation and the eventual work to be done. We need an allocation in place in order to proceed.

Second, whatever the process or pace of the larger Fourth Street project, there is one element that can—and should—be addressed more immediately: the hole in front of 213 East Fourth, about which I have communicated with the Village Council several times before. The Village has already made an intervention (and therefore set a precedent) by putting chain-link screening over it, but that was a stop-gap measure at best. As I wrote to President Wetherbee (Sept. 28, 2021), “While the cover might prevent people from falling in, it is not safe for standing, nor can it support vehicles, especially emergency vehicles, that might drive over it. Moreover, the cover makes exceedingly difficult the removal of vegetation and trash from the hole, thus impeding the flow of water and creating back-ups in several residences on Fourth Street.”

Now, in the interest of protecting both the environment and public safety, it’s important to take that prior step to the next level, with a stronger cover that will allow appropriate exposure to air but also withstand the weight of people and vehicles. I’ve been told a reasonable estimate for providing such a cover would be less than \$5000—much less costly, I suspect, than the liability the Village would face should anyone drive into the hole, which is on the Village right-of-way. It’s a comparatively small job that could have much larger implications.

I will appreciate your taking timely and concrete steps on these matters, and I anticipate a positive response.

With best regards,

Gregory Nobles