

HIGHWAY COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: July 9, 2024
LOCATION: Kendall County Highway Department
MEMBERS PRESENT: Zach Bachmann, Brian DeBolt, Dan Koukol, Scott Gengler & Ruben Rodriguez
STAFF PRESENT: Michele Riley and Francis Klaas
ALSO PRESENT: P.J. Fitzpatrick and Skyler Evans

The committee meeting convened at 3:31 P.M. with roll call of committee members. All present. Quorum established.

Motion DeBolt; second Koukol, to approve the agenda. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion Rodriguez; second Gengler, to approve the Highway Committee minutes from May 14, 2024. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion Gengler; second DeBolt, to recommend approval of an ordinance granting variance to the Kendall County Highway Access Regulation Ordinance for QuikTrip Corporation. Bachmann described the petition and reminded committee members that the petitioner had been to Highway Committee about a year ago and had requested full access to Ridge Road just south of Midpoint Road, which had been denied at that time. Klaas discussed some of the history at this location. QuikTrip is now proposing to install just a right in / right out on the west side of Ridge Road just north of the existing Shell gas station. He indicated that the County's ordinance would require a barrier median on Ridge Road in order to allow for QuikTrip to install the proposed access. He also stated that the barrier median would be installed from the I-80 ramps all the way to Midpoint Road.

Rodriguez confirmed that traffic wanting to go north from the QuikTrip would have to go back to Midpoint Road to continue north. Koukol asked if this would prevent traffic from getting into the Shell station, because he certainly didn't want to shut them out. Bachmann discussed why the previous petition had been denied – because Shell's driveways essentially extended all along their frontage and was going to create a problem for any access to QuikTrip. Committee members agreed that the current petition was going to be a problem for Shell. Klaas indicated that one of the conditions of the variance was QuikTrip had to provide easement across their property to allow Shell traffic to go to Midpoint Road and then through QuikTrip property to Shell's station, providing for truck traffic to get back to Shell.

Koukol reminded members that right after QuikTrip's petition was denied last year, they installed concrete barriers across the access that Shell was using but was on QuikTrip's property. He indicated that Shell traffic was still using that access but would not be able to if a barrier median was placed on Ridge Road. Bachmann pointed out that there were multiple issues with Shell's access and reiterated the fact that it is in noncompliance with the County's access ordinance. DeBolt thought that installing a barrier median on Ridge might invite a lawsuit from Shell. Koukol asked Klaas what his suggestion would be on this petition. Klaas stated that Shell really hasn't had an opportunity to review and address the current access plan for QuikTrip. He

thought it would be appropriate to table the matter for a month. It might even give QuikTrip and Shell an opportunity to work out an amicable agreement. Bachmann agreed that we need more time to think about it and talk to the State's Attorney Office. Klaas also stated that he had talked to the owner of Shell today and indicated that the owner wants an opportunity to be heard.

Klaas also wanted to point out that Shell was using QuikTrip's property for an illegal entrance. Additionally, Shell installed new pumps and a canopy to serve tractor-trailers about 10 years ago... a move that would have triggered the "significant change in trip generation" clause in the County's access ordinance. This would have required Shell to come into compliance with the ordinance 10 years ago, which would have eliminated their full access. The PB&Z Department was evidently not aware of this requirement at the time. Klaas felt that the County had a strong legal argument to say that Shell was grandfathered in for their access points until they changed the nature of their business 10 years ago, and then they should have come into compliance with the access ordinance.

DeBolt thought that the County should get a letter from Shell agreeing to the limiting access being proposed by QuikTrip. Klaas added that Shell's setbacks, access, and other things were in non-compliance with county ordinances and felt that Shell was in a tough spot due to the size of their lot. He thought that it was inevitable that Shell would have to come into compliance. Rodriguez emphasized that building the median on Ridge Road was the biggest issue effecting both Shell and QuikTrip. Bachmann also emphasized the fact that this location is right off the Interstate and is a very congested area.

Gengler questioned the nature of the existing access for Shell. Klaas indicated that Shell had full access across most of their frontage, allowing turns just about anywhere on their property. Gengler asked if the barrier median would be constructed just in the area north of Shell, but Klaas said that the current proposal is to construct it from the I-80 ramps all the way to Midpoint Road. He stated that there are over 24,000 vehicles per day on Ridge Road; so if there were even 2 semi's trying to turn into the Shell, it would back traffic up into the thru-lanes, creating a serious safety issue. He also discussed the similar problems that occurred south of I-80 on Ridge Road and how Minooka eventually built a barrier median on Ridge Road to prevent similar congestion problems in that area. Klaas felt that the area north of I-80 is going to have the exact same problems and reemphasized that a barrier median was inevitable. Rodriguez asked if there had been a lot of accidents in the area of the Shell station. Klaas had no accident data available for the committee at this time.

Gengler made a motion to table; seconded by DeBolt. By voice vote, all were in favor of tabling the original motion.

Motion Bachmann; second DeBolt, to recommend approval of a petition for county aid to repair bridge, culvert or drainage structures on Wheeler Road in Kendall Township. Bachmann briefed the committee on the proposed project, which uses Township Bridge Program (TBP) funds for approximately 80% of construction costs. Engineering and land acquisition costs would be split 50/50 between County and Township. DeBolt asked for the exact location of the project. Klaas stated that it was on Wheeler Road just east of Hopkins Road. He gave a brief history of the TBP program and how the program had increased dramatically during the past year. It will allow the county and townships to build a new bridge about every other year instead of about

every 4th year. The total petition is for \$250,000, which costs would be split evenly between each agency.

Gengler asked about future bridge construction through this program. Klaas indicated that the 5-year plan calls for replacement of the Reservation Road Bridge next, and then the Schaefer Road Bridge after that. Rodriguez asked if the Wheeler Bridge was similar to the Schlapp Road Bridge that was recently constructed. Klaas stated that Schlapp was a 3-barrel box culvert with a cost over a \$1 million, while Wheeler was a single span press-brake tub girder style bridge with an estimated cost of about \$750,000. Koukol pointed out that this is still a very expensive bridge for a low volume road. Klaas agreed but pointed out how bridge construction costs have exploded in recent years, and this is expected to be a 100-year bridge. Motion approved unanimously.

Bachmann provided an update for the ongoing planning and engineering efforts related to the Connect Kendall County project. He thought the routing was essentially done and permitting would be the next big effort. There are basically two rings that form the backbone of the network, and fingers would extend out from the two main rings. DeBolt asked when wires would be put in the ground. Bachmann discussed the variable types of hardware that would go in the ground or be attached above-ground to existing poles, as well as some of the changes from the original routing. Koukol asked when citizens would actually be able to start using the internet. Bachmann discussed some of the delays that have come up along the way... specifically some State-related matters. He thought final submission of the plan to the State should happen soon, including issuance of bonds. He indicated that actual placement of fiber could begin as soon as this September, and construction of the network would then take about 2 years. He added that, even if the rings aren't complete, internet could be delivered as the rings and network is built. Committee members had some questions about the spurs that extend from the two main rings. Bachmann identified some specific sites for connection to other governmental agencies.

Gengler asked if the construction would all be in the ground. Bachmann stated that the preferred location would be buried cable, but certain locations would require aerial lines. One example of aerial lines would be near Route 30. He thought that using buried lines would decrease liability, reduce rental costs on poles, and be easier to fix. Klaas asked if the underground wires would be placed in rigid conduit. Bachmann thought the majority of the network would be direct burial wires, except in the middle mile and some of the main network where the wires would be really big and might be in a conduit. Gengler asked about road and railroad crossings. Bachmann indicated that one of the strategies for RR crossings would be to rent space in conduits that other utilities own. If no other solutions are available, then boring would be the next alternative.

Rodriguez asked what the biggest concerns from Highway Department would be. Klaas discussed some of the frustrations with the many utilities located in highway rights-of-way. He thought placing the fiber deeper rather than shallower would be a good thing. Gengler wondered how deep. Klaas asked Bachmann if there were any federal or state standards that would govern the depth. Bachmann didn't think so. General consensus was that the fiber should be at least 3' to 5' deep.

DeBolt asked if there would be any wireless facilities constructed as part of this project. Bachmann indicated that there would be some wireless constructed which should enhance some

of the existing wireless networks that already exist in the County. They are working out agreements with some of the existing ISP's. Connect Kendall County Commission should be bringing more information to the County Board in August.

Klaas presented some general information about proposed budgets for FY 2025. The proposed property tax levy, which includes levies to Highway Fund and Bridge Fund, total \$2 million - \$1.5 million for Highway and \$0.5 million for Bridge. This is the same amount that has been levied for the past 17 years. He indicated that the Highway Department manages 9 funds, but only those 2 funds use property taxes. Salary line items are proposed to increase 3.22% year over year. He stated that his strategy was to give bigger raises to the younger guys and smaller raises to the older guys who are making more money. DeBolt asked how many employees the Highway Department has. Klaas stated that there were 14 full-time employees and about a half dozen parttime, indicating that they are very small compared to the amount of money they manage. DeBolt also asked if the bike path between Hoover and Fox River Bluffs was in the budget. Klaas indicated it was. Koukol thought it was a good strategy to reward the younger employees with bigger raises. He noted that turnover rates were high with various local municipalities. DeBolt also asked about the proposed re-grading project near Eldamain Road in the vicinity of the Beck Farm and Subat Forest Preserve. He described the water problem and possible solution by removing some riprap and existing earth on the west side of Eldamain. Committee discussed possible solutions to dry up the standing water at this location.

Gengler asked about the proposed MFT budgets. Klaas stated that those budgets included many maintenance-type projects around the county, and he simply hasn't had time to finalize all those projects. He also discussed the long-term strategy to build up a larger fund balance in the MFT Fund so those accumulated funds could be applied to the Ridge Road widening project, thus reducing the required bond issue that is anticipated. Rodriguez asked who does the grant writing and grant management for Highway Department. Klaas indicated that, in general, engineering consultants do the grant writing. In regard to management, that usually wasn't an issue because almost all the grants that the Department gets are federal grants. In those cases, IDOT becomes the lead agency for the project, accepts all the grant money, and manages the payments. Highway Department doesn't actually touch the money and so doesn't have to manage the grant. It simplifies the process and doesn't require additional personnel.

In Other Business, Gengler noted that construction had begun on the Galena-Cannonball intersection improvement. Klaas stated that work was also ongoing for the Collins Road project. Bachmann asked about the proposed bike path on Collins Road. Klaas stated that the improvement includes a new multi-use path that connects at Grove Road, runs along the south side of Collins Road, across Morgan Creek, and then turns south to make a connection to the path in Hunt Club Subdivision. The path is being constructed at no cost to Oswegoland Park District; but after construction, will be maintained by OPD. Koukol asked about the construction on Johnson Road & 143rd. He didn't think much had happened in the past few weeks. Klaas indicated that Village Plainfield was the lead agency, and he didn't have any updates. DeBolt asked about the N. Johnson St. project. Klaas stated that utility relocation was the next hurdle. Actual road construction will be delayed until next year. All right-of-way has been cleared for that project.

Koukol discussed the pushback he had been getting in regard to the Seward Township plan. He expressed his desire for more red – business and commercial development – especially

considering the Ridge Road corridor that will be widened in the near future. This will generate more tax revenue. He thought showing all of Seward Township as ag zoning was unrealistic. Klaas thought that the reality of the situation is that these areas are going to be annexed by municipalities and then the County and Townships will no longer be driving the bus.

Motion Gengler; second DeBolt, to forward Highway Department bills for the month of July in the amount of \$80,467.96 to the Finance Committee for approval. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion Rodriguez; second Gengler to adjourn the meeting at 4:23 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Francis C. Klaas, P.E.
Kendall County Engineer

Action Items

1. Petition for County aid to build or repair bridge, culvert or drainage structure on Wheeler Road in Kendall Township