

GLFPC Summary/Interpretation

GLA Road and Weed Committee Meeting

February 11, 2016

This meeting summary/interpretation is being distributed to the GLA Board and Association as a volunteer service by GLFPC. Your suggestions are welcome should there be oversights or errors.

The GLA Secretary, Charlene Murphy, convened the Road and Weed Committee meeting on February 11, 2016 at 6:30 pm at Liberty Hall. Confusion about the meeting time, resulted in half of the attendees arriving at 6:30 pm and others at 7 pm. Though all three co-chairs were present, Dennis Riley, Ed Dobrowski and Paul Rantallo, Murphy chaired the entire meeting, after stating that she was only there to record the minutes. It was the first GLA Road and Weed Committee meeting since November 19, 2015.

One attendee called the annual scraping, grading and tapping down of gravel roads as something that only works for about two months. Just moving stuff around is not the answer because the washboards return and deepen year after year, she said. A rebuild approach may cost more, but we do need to start somewhere.

Murphy agreed, adding that Rantallo also believes that switching from rounded gravel to angular gravel with a binder is the way to go to rebuild our road base, now that there is more road money in the budget.

Another attendee agreed, and said the real problem is that our roads were not properly constructed from the very beginning. We need a long-term solution. There is no point in wasting money year after year with maintenance-work that does not last.

To get a professional view about a long-range plan, one landowner called for a *Request for a Proposal* (R.F.P.) from a public engineering company specializing in road construction.

Another said that if the committee had a 5-year plan that members could understand, then landowners would be more accepting and patient about waiting to have their roads upgraded.

Of great significance, is the fact that the board has finally recognized that the Road Policy is actually invalid. Because the "Road Policy" goes against our GLA Covenants, it fails, explained by Legal Committee member, Dan Kehoe. Then, we have another level of discussion, a landowner said. For years, the

"Road Policy" prioritized maintenance based on usage. The Covenants clearly state the GLA *must* provide road maintenance on *all* community roads, without exception.

Based on one estimate, if it takes \$ 2.5 million to bring our roads up to county standards, then we may have to think about a bond to fund such a plan, she continued. She added that with the stock market imploding, there is renewed interest in government bonds and that is how a Rural Special Improvement District (RSID) is funded.

According to board member Dan Kehoe, who is not on the Road Committee, GLA has its own road standards, so it does not have to abide by county standards. He said that originally the GLA followed the Church's recommendations for road standards.

Revisiting the R.F.P. Riley voiced a need to consult with a reputable engineering firm to help determine what the most cost-effective method to maintain our roads really is. "We cannot continue to hire the same road contractor whose crack filling materials have lifted off two years in a row. A professional road person is the way to go," he said.

Referring back to Rantallo's handwritten notes, Murphy said Rantallo has found an experienced road contractor and heavy equipment operator, Gene Lembke, owner of Lembke Excavating, Inc. Presently, the committee chairs are negotiating by phone for price quotes and equipment inventory. The plan is to have him dig drainage ditches parallel to the roads, remove large rocks, grade slopes and do crowning with the intent to minimize erosion.

Kehoe speculated that maybe in five years, all the roads could be graveled, and then by that time, we would know the total cost. "GLA has never actually figured out what it would cost to maintain all of the roads," he said. Hopefully, our maintenance costs will be reduced with this new type of gravel.

Then, Rantallo stepped in to quickly recite his road report and statement of progress. Gerald Dubiel had previously read this same report for Rantallo during the February board meeting, because Rantallo participated via speaker phone.

1. New edge-of-the-road stakes are now in place in both NG and SG.
2. The committee has engineered road and ditch drawings from Park County that can be used for the ditch work. Rantallo stated that work is underway to searching for a new road contractor, negotiating bids and prices in order to start this process in the spring.

In answer to Road Committee Co-Chair Ed Dobrowski's question of who is the new road contractor, Paul said "we" are negotiating.

3. We have a verbal commitment for a new contractor for road grading, but we still need price quotes and equipment inventory. He is out of state until April. A big plus for Lembke, is that he is an experienced road builder, heavy equipment operator and has connections to a supply of angular crushed rock, which we will need to rebuild the road base, continued Rantallo.
4. Rantallo went on, we have a replacement bid for an abandoned sump project on Capricorn. It is \$1800, which is \$700 less than the original price. "Who is the contractor? Were three bids made?" a landowner asked. "No, \$2500 was approved a long time ago. I'm the contractor, Rantallo revealed. My bid is \$700 lower. We do not have to rebid it," he said.

When the audience reacted to the announcement that this board member would be, yet again, the one paid for road work, Murphy said, "I just think you ought not to go there."

"But wait", said Kehoe. "There is nothing wrong with Paul doing it!"

"But nobody believes that." added Murphy.

Kehoe then explained there is *no due process on bids* and that bidding is part of the board's discretion.

Rantallo reported that he had discussed the other projects with Murphy, who could answer questions later, as he was only able stay for half an hour.

Speculating about which areas of the road base would need rebuilding, Rantallo said that if there is no heaving, then adding crushed gravel will work.

Murphy then redirected the meeting and asked the road committee what goals they had in mind for 2016. Dobrowski said that road maintenance is number one.

Riley said he wanted to know what it would cost to maintain *all* the roads in Glastonbury, including the private subdivision roads. He said it is really hard to ask someone to pay a full road assessment when GLA does not plow his or her road. Others noted that everyone's road begins at the highway.

A landowner said people will start paying their assessments again when road maintenance becomes *the number one priority* and the board stops spending so much money on attorneys and administration. Addressing Rantallo

directly, the landowner called for professional road management stating that, "the GLA road problems are a monster that is over your head!"

Returning to setting goals, Riley said a 5-year plan may not be realistic and that plans are needed for both annual maintenance and long-term goals.

Another said that if there were a goal to double the road budget, it would still be a pittance towards what the roads really need. It was noted that if the road funds were to be increased by more than 10% of GLA's entire annual budget (estimated at \$142,000), a landowner vote of support would be needed. Murphy stated that in 2016, 33% of GLA money will be spent on non-road expenditures and that 67% is allotted for the roads.

GLFPC NOTE: According to a landowner, who has carefully studied the financials, only about 58% of every dollar actually goes into the road fund.

As the brainstorming ended, a consensus was reached that a professional road plan is needed for the long-term, and that immediate road maintenance should focus on ditch installation, grading of slopes, comprehensive road crowning and the use of angular gravel to rebuild the road base.

Rantallo agreed to get specific quotes from Lembke for the ditch work. He also agreed that it is time to update the road log for SG and create one for NG. It was purported that the last road inspection by this committee had not been done in three years. It was suggested that landowners might do the road inspection work, although no action was taken. The implication was that the new road contractor has already been decided, though earlier, Rantallo said negotiations are still underway.

The next discussion was about snow issues. Murphy itemized this season's maintenance costs on the GLA's only snowplow truck. Then she continued to push for a two-year plan to get a second snowplow truck.

Road Committee member Walter Wunsch said the present truck, which is a one-ton diesel with dual wheels and about 200,000 miles on it, is being maintained in above average condition. Consensus followed that GLA needs to continue to operate with one snowplow truck, primarily because of the mild winter and to depend on private contractors, as needed.

As discussion returned to more goal-setting, one landowner reported on his extensive work to inventory all GLA roads. He showed several categories of road improvements and calculated the costs for each level. Having distributed a one-page summary of his "Comprehensive Road Plan," he shared that more details could be found on the website: <http://glastonbury.freeforums.net/>. He advocated an RSID (see above). It is a 20-year state bond administered at the county level that would bring our roads up to much higher standards. He also explained that an RSID could be

established for either all or only part of the GLA road system. All community landowners would be equally taxed with a projected collection rate of 100%.

A discussion followed to explore the pros and cons of an RSID. Dobrowski said the cost of maintenance needs to be part of the equation, and that the county fees for maintenance, which would be part of an RSID, are sky-high. Another reported that landowner association in the Wineglass Subdivision is starting an RSID bond program to fund its road maintenance. She suggested there could be a lot to learn from their experience.

In other discussion, Regina Wunsch, former GLA financial consultant, suggested that engineering analysis fees for the long-term road plan could be funded with GLA's unallocated savings, which are about \$42,000.

Calling it "earth-shattering news" to learn that the 176 acres surrounding the NG soccer field is owned by the Church Universal and Triumphant, that has never been under the jurisdiction of the GLA Covenants, a landowner asked how this happened. Kehoe and Walter Wunsch explained that it was a cost-saving move for the church to "remove" those lands from GLA. Our landowner's association was formed in 1997, thus becoming independent from C.U.T. It was noted that the original plans for this 176 acres were for a high-density development, which have faded with time. She said it did not seem fair that we landowners have been maintaining a road that adds to the value of church property, especially because they do not pay any assessments.

GLFPC Note: It has been 19 years since this deal was made between the Church and the GLA. Have they ever paid assessments on these 176 acres, which comprises numerous parcels?

Returning to the goals, consensus followed that a separate committee should be formed to work on the long-term road plans. Claudette Dirkers, Jeff Ladewig, Tim Brockett, and Michael Laverty were nominated. All agreed to volunteer and serve on this subcommittee with Riley, as the Chair. Kehoe said the board would first need to approve the new committee and appoint the members.

Agreement on short-term action items could not be reached due to the now invalid Road Policy. Some said work should begin on the most used roads. Others said work on the heavily used roads should be postponed until a professional engineer is consulted. Landowners do not want to spend any more money on nothing more than makeshift repairs. It was agreed that any conclusions about the testing of a road stabilization product, called Pennzsupress D, would need to be delayed until spring. This innovative chemical compound had been applied to a 100-foot section of Arcturus Road in South Glastonbury.

Even though the long-term committee is not yet established, it was agreed that Riley would draft a newspaper ad to be published in several regional newspapers requesting bids from engineering firms interested in analyzing our roads.

The nearly three hour-long meeting ended with Murphy calling it "productive".

GLFPC Note: *There is a certain practicality and efficiency when GLA's roadwork plans are decided without due process of committee meeting notification and minutes. GLA is licensed by the State of Montana to operate as a non-profit corporation. With all due respect, as a private corporation, GLA is legally required to do business with a higher level of due process than is the current practice.*

[Glastonbury Landowners For Positive Change](#)