

## Glastonbury Landowners for Positive Change

***The mission of the GLFPC is to foster a landowner's association, of the people, by the people, and for the people of Glastonbury, create a harmonious and inclusive community, and enhance property values.***

This summary/interpretation of the June 21, 2016, GLA Road & Weed Meeting is offered a volunteer service by the GLFPC.

Your suggestions are welcome, should there be oversight or errors.

### Summary and Interpretation

Another meeting of the Road and Weed Committee took place in the larger room of Liberty Hall on Tuesday evening, June 21, 2016, from 7-9 pm. Only five of the eleven board members on this committee were in attendance, along seven landowners. The meeting began with private conversations, which consumed at least ten minutes of time. Curiously, not one of the three Co-Chairs Paul Rantalalo (NG), Ed Dobrowski (LS) and Dennis Riley (HS) had called the meeting to order. No agenda was distributed, either.

**GLFPC Note:** Based on a previous email notification, there were to be four items on the agenda: 1). Discuss present and future pavement maintenance. 2). Discuss spring grading progress. 3). Discuss signs and snow fencing. 4). Discuss a second snow plow truck.

Intervening, committee member Charlene Murphy proceeded to ask Dobrowski to give an update on Mike Adkin's bid to do the gravel and grading work on South Glastonbury roads. He reported the following:

- Adkins' initial bid was \$44,900.
- GLA had \$38,250 to spend on SG roads
- The renegotiated bid from Adkins was \$39,900.

Dobrowski accepted Adkins' second bid. To compensate for the difference in expenditure, Dobrowski had decided to reduce the amount of gravel by two truckloads each, originally allocated to Hercules and Taurus Roads. During the previous Road and Weed Committee meeting on June 6th, the directors decided that additional money would have to be withdrawn from the SG Road Reserve Fund to pay for the extra gravel loads earmarked for Arcturus Road, Dobrowski's pet project.

A good ole boy conversation ensued, which then percolated into several simultaneous discussions, leaving landowners struggling to make sense of what was being brokered. In time, it became clear that Lembcke would complete the spring gravel and grading in NG. Adkins is

expected to start working in SG on Monday, June 27, 2016, completing the unsatisfactory work relinquished by Lembcke. Many landowners in South Glastonbury have reported that the roadbed had been churned up and then abandoned. As a result of this incomplete work, their roads are littered countless protruding shards. Sizeable rocks, once buried, have become impediments to driving. How many landowners have had flat tires or other associated damage to their vehicles?

For several weeks, NG landowners have dodged rows of gravel that Lembcke dumped right down the middle of some of their roads and lining the sides of other roads. Several mishaps have occurred on the hills and curves where this gravel had been deposited. Rantalalo reported that Lembcke is nearly finished with the “*second*” grading to spread gravel. This made no sense to a number of attendees. Why would Lembcke need to grade the roads twice? What additional cost will there be to landowners? Many preexisting washboards remain. Some smaller stretches of road now have a new 3 inch layer of gravel, while the vast majority of NG gravel roads are still down to the bare dirt road base. Where the two differing surfaces adjoin, those areas are abrupt and bumpy. Landowners called the uneven road surface “absurd!” They also wanted to know why the extensive roadside ditch work, well-endorsed and scheduled as a first priority, never happened. Rantalalo called for “Patience, patience, patience!”

When a landowner pointed out the obvious lack of quality of work done so far, Rantalalo claimed that once all the roads were graveled, wetted and rolled, Lembcke would return for a *third* time to grade them. Landowners became further skeptical upon hearing this claim. Rantalalo continued on, revealing that Lembcke had donated two truckloads of gravel and had deducted a \$1,000 from our bill. Then, he handed Dobrowski a shuffled stack of “gravel tickets,” for those loads, already delivered. But, he did not disclose exactly how much the bill was to date.

Discussion then turned to the unrepaired pothole on the North Hill in NG. Rantalalo indicated that no one would want to come out just for this one small job. Wunsch suggested another viable answer to fix the substantial pothole using a “cold pack,” which is known for being reasonably durable, albeit temporary. This way, some more time could be afforded until more asphalt repairs inevitably surface, making it mutually beneficial.

Rantalalo soon mentioned that he would willingly take that repair job. Then, in a somewhat joking manner, he said some landowners have objected to his taking on such jobs as a board member. Responding to his comment, a knowledgeable landowner suggested that he remove himself from the board. Doing so would enable him to be the primary road repairman in the community without having a constant conflict of interest.

**GLFPC Note:** Rantalalo has a history of routinely getting community road repair jobs without there being a bidding process. Generating an income stream by securing jobs through the board, of which he is a director, is considered a conflict of interest by many landowners.

Next, the subject of weed control was covered. This was not an agenda item, but committee participants resumed the debate, which had been unresolved from the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Attempts were made to find a workable solution to deal with roadside weeds. The majority of attendees opposed the spraying of toxic herbicides throughout the community. Mention was made of using a less poisonous substance, industrial vinegar with a 15% concentration. Despite the dialogue, the results were inconclusive. A consensus could not be reached nor any action implemented. It must be noted, that Gerald Dubiel, the committee member who usually handles this controversial issue, was absent. The committee will defer this significant decision to the board.

Park County Weed Management Board recommends that chemical weed control be done in mid-spring and early fall. GLA has traditionally hired a licensed contractor to spray herbicides to control noxious weeds before they blossom and go to seed. This practice is under review because the “war on weeds” was a lost cause years ago. It is self-evident that such weeds are a pervasive problem. Furthermore, many landowners are not comfortable with the use of toxic chemicals, especially due to their ineffectiveness, along with dousing those areas where people most often walk.

Moving on to yet another unfinished discussion, was the suggestion of whether the GLA should purchase a second snowplow truck. Murphy reminded those present that \$12,500 had been allocated for a second snow plow truck months ago when the budget was set by board earlier in the year. Realistically, the projected cost of a snowplow truck commensurate to our winter plowing needs would carry a price tag of roughly \$25,000. A small minority thought it better that GLA purchase a used road grader, at a minimum cost of \$50,000. It was stated that a grader could be used for snow removal, as well as for grading our own the roads four times/yr. rather than paying an outside contractor. What about insurance and maintenance on such a large piece of equipment, one wonders? Who in the community would do the work? Is a Commercial Driver’s License required? Although there was a show of hands to support the notion of purchasing a second plow truck, the decision would ultimately be deferred to the board. However, it was decided that a subcommittee should be formed to look into same.

The long-debated question of whether to hire a road engineer to assess both our gravel and paved roads generated the next possible step. Committee member Walter Wunsch suggested that some committee members meet with David Tonkin, a SG landowner and retired road engineer. The plan is that Rantallo, Riley and Wunsch would soon drive with Tonkin to assess the gravel roads in HS and the paved roads in NG.

What will this engineer recommend and at what cost to landowners? The extent of deterioration of our roads well exceeds what we have in our budget to cover the necessary repairs to our road network. The NG paved loop is especially troubling. Asphalt roads are four times more expensive to maintain than gravel roads.

For many years, and quite likely from the beginning of the GLA, numerous Road and Weed Committees have neglected to figure out a long-term road plan for our community. Landowners have consistently advocated such measures, but to no avail. The total cost to bring our roads to an acceptable state could range from hundreds of thousands of dollars for basic

repairs, all the way up to millions of dollars in order to meet Park County Road Standards.

An erudite landowner has formulated a comprehensive road plan delineating different levels of repairs and associated costs, which the board has ignored. Here is the link to his detailed plan:

<http://glastonbury.freeforums.net/thread/118/comprehensive-road-plan-work-progress>

The meeting dissipated shortly before 9 pm as attendees stood up and left the room.

**GLFPC Note:** *It is problematic that the Road and Weed Committee continue to handle their business without the due process of written bids, motions and voting. It is important to bear in mind that this committee is spending a near-record amount of money on our roads this year. Because GLA is licensed to operate as a Non-Profit Corporation in Montana, its use of corporate funds must comply with state laws and mainstream fiduciary practice. Simply stated, this brings into serious question the manner in which the GLA's road committee so casually spends corporate funds without any established business model, long-term planning, research or due process, which ends up being a waste of time and money. Where is the professionalism so key the success of this community?*

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