

<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>YANKEE SPRINGS TOWNSHIP</b>  <b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b>  <b>Joint Meeting Of</b>  <b><u>Board of Trustees, Planning Commission and</u></b>  <b><u>Zoning Board of Appeals and</u></b>  <b><u>MDOT</u></b>  <b><u>6:30 p.m.</u></b>  <b>Tuesday, August 15, 2017</b>  <b>Yankee Springs Township Hall</b>  <b>284 North Briggs Road, Middleville, Michigan 49333</b> </p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MINUTES</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"> <b>MINUTES</b>  Page 1 of 8  YST Joint Meeting with  MDOT  8.15.17  APPROVED  Sept. 14, 2017 </p>
<p>Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Supervisor Mark Englerth.</p> <p><b>Roll Call:</b></p> <p><b><u>Board of Trustees:</u></b> All Present: J. Lippert, M. Englerth, R. Rottschafer, Jansma, VandenBerg</p> <p><b><u>Planning Commission:</u></b> Strickland, Fiala, VandenBerg, Purcell, Beukema, Heystek.</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Board of Appeals:</u></b> Rottschafer (Board Rep.), Strickland, Heilman, Delamar.</p> <p><b>Zoning Administrator:</b> Larry Knowles, ZA</p> <p><b>MDOT Representatives:</b> Art Green and Kerwin Keen, Permits Engineer</p> <p><b>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b></p> <p>Visitors: 5</p>	<p><b>CALL TO ORDER</b></p> <p><b>ROLL CALL</b></p> <p><b>PLEDGE</b></p>
<p><b>Purpose of Meeting:</b></p> <p><i>Question and Answer discussion regarding M-179 Corridor Future and Past Developments: (the following questions were not discussed in order.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedure to eliminate “Jake Braking” at the Intersection of M-179 &amp; Briggs Rd.</li> <li>• How can we obtain an MDOT Grant for a Non-Motorized Trail parallel to M-179 between Briggs Road &amp; Patterson?</li> <li>• Access Management Plan</li> <li>• Why can’t easement on M-179 just be widened to save \$ and Grant \$</li> <li>• There are too many Ingress and Egress onto M-179 – Speed Limit 55 mph – How can this be corrected?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Purpose of Meeting</b></p>
<p>The first question addressed by K. Keen of MDOT was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>How can we obtain an MDOT Grant for a Non-Motorized Trail parallel to M-179 between Briggs Road &amp; Patterson?</u></b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Grant/Non-Motorized Trail Question</b></p>

**Keen advised:**

- Get a good consultant.
- Develop a plan with the players involved in the trail.
- Align yourselves with other entities, other townships, the road commission and user groups.
- Present your trail plan as part of a larger plan; tie it in as part of the transit system.
- "GREASE THE SKIDS" with those being affected by having the trails run near them.

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• **Why can't easement on M-179 just be widened to save \$ and Grant \$**

Kerwin Keen also spoke of statutory right of way - 66' wide plus driveways, sidewalks and surface drainage. Surface drainage needs approximately 10 feet on both sides. Keen added that when you take into consideration 66' plus 2 - 12' lanes plus 20' for drainage plus other improvements (such as utility poles), it doesn't leave a lot of real estate left. "Available real estate starts to trim away," commented Keen.

Keen noted "More width is better" - (the more separation between driving lanes and non-motorized trails is better).

Widening could constitute a "taking" - and would be considered as a last resort. "We can't just arbitrarily increase right of way to make room for it (trail) without obtaining the easements" commented Keen.

• **There are too many Ingress and Egress onto M-179 - Speed Limit 55 mph - How can this be corrected?**

*K. Keen commented that it was his understanding that a speed study was made about a year ago with the determination that the 55 mph speed limit is correct.*

**Mike Varano, YS Resident**, commented that he disagrees with the 55 mph speed limit (on M-179). M. Varano referred to the area as being 40 mph in the past. When he came back in 1964 (from military service) the signs (40 mph) were gone. Mr. Varano spoke of seeing a family of three on bikes and a semi accelerating behind them recently. He spoke of an accident on Alpine in which a 10-year old was "sucked in" by a semi.

**Ron Heilman, YS Resident**, mentioned a stop on both ends (Briggs and Patterson) so people are already at 0 (mph) so adjustments/regulations could be made to that corridor (1.7 mile) area. Heilman also spoke about turning left into the daycare at GLCC in the morning and rear end incidents because there's no place to turn. The road is not wide enough for them to swing around of people turning left, so they have to stop. R. Heilman has heard brakes squeal because people haven't been paying attention when someone is turning left to go into the daycare. R. Heilman also noted that kids ride bikes along the side of M-179 (because there's no other place to ride) to get to the park. "One of them falls off, they're toast. Cars coming at 55 will never be able to stop," added Heilman.

**M. Varano** - also commented "You go down M-179 going East and then make the turn to the State Park and it goes down to 30 mph- past the State Park -past Sandy's Restaurant. Go up past Hastings Point Road and you go all the way to McKibben's car lot and from that point it's 40 mph out there in the country, and there's nothing there but two lane road. No businesses. No homes to speak of. Why do you have a 40 mph speed limit out there when

**Ingress/Egress/Speed  
Limit 55 mph  
Question**

you have 55 mph on a 1.7 mile stretch where we have homes, businesses, and churches?" Keen commented on it being a county road.

**Jan Lippert** inquired, "Going west into Allegan County, how does the casino get posted 45 mph for that small stretch (from Bradley)?"

**Keen** commented about speed limits being set by the MSP in conjunction with MDOT. A speed study is completed. "They take the 85 percentile – meaning 50% drive faster than that and the rest are at or below that limit and say that is what people are comfortable driving with. From there they work in 5 mph increments and post the speed limit accordingly," commented Keen. Keen assumes a study was done with state police and they determined that 45 mph was appropriate.

**Paul Heystek** commented for clarification, "A speed study was done on this stretch (M-179 between Briggs and Patterson) and the determination that you (MDOT) came up was – was 55 mph?" Keen agreed with P. Heystek and confirmed the 55 mph limit.

**Paul Hoag, YS Resident-** inquired as to when the speed study was done.

**K. Keen** replied that June 26 was the date that comes to mind. "What the speed study is intended to do is to identify what we feel is a safe limit to operate. So, we don't do speed studies on the S-curve going thru downtown GR on Friday afternoon because the speed limit would be abysmal. We take with the highest safe operating conditions. We don't do them while its raining, or when there are special events. That's the limit. We let the traffic conditions which are present outside of the idea relying on common sense of the drivers to adjust to the conditions that are present.

**G. Purcell** – commented that speed is one thing, dealing with public safety, but there are other issues that can be relevant to traffic engineering design such as acceleration, deceleration and passing lanes that could avoid the negative situation of those dropping off at daycare at the church. Purcell asked about making some kinds of those safety improvements to avoid injury, accidents or damage to property or person.

**Kerwin Keen** –commented "When the church added the day care they created a condition that is above and beyond that would normally be expected. So, yes it should probably be evaluated ....and it is typically incumbent upon those who are creating the need (in this case and example, the church) to finance and pay for those. Not knowing that –that's ever going to happen, we have received the type of safety funding we have. We work on a five (5) year plan. So work that is going in right now, started in the plan getting approved in 2012. Before that there were probably several years that it got kicked down the road because of other bigger projects. So we are spending money today that was earmarked in 2012. So safety funding projects, those funds follow election years or non-election years, they become more available and less available. The counties are typically a pretty good source knowing when those are available and finding out where they could be done. Our maintenance crews that cover the Barry County area would like to use those for various other things. If they're available and we could document that they would mitigate a condition, they jump up in their ability to utilize for those purposes. What you've got to realize, there's a lot of roads and a lot of people with problems very similar to yours. So the competition is going to be there."

**R. Rottschafer** asked if there was an appeals process.

**K. Keen** answered that he wasn't aware of any.

**Art Green, of MDOT** commented that he was out on 179 with the speed study.

**M. Englerth, Supervisor**, commented on going to 179 with a state trooper and stopped at Parker to “see it thru that set of eyes.” “The state trooper that came in that was the best in the state that assessed the speed limit, as we pulled our car a foot off of the fog line, got out and observed the road. The state trooper left the scene and said it was unsafe to stand there. Is that correct? But yet we let our kids ride their bikes down there. So which is it? I understand you have inherited 179 and we kind of did to, because it used to be a county road and it kind of got busier and busier.” Englerth spoke of continued growth and more traffic from Bradford White and Middleville Tool & Die. “So where is the happy medium if we cannot reduce the speeds; and how do we make it safer? I think that is what we all want. The shoulders do not meet the standard width of a state highway. It I go thru Sunfield, Mulligan or Woodland,... I drop my speed to 35 in Woodland. So what we’re asking for, if not the speed, can we take a look at Parker or Archwood?”

**K. Keen** commented MDOT has no jurisdiction on county roads.

**Englerth** asked if there was a working relationship between MDOT and the county.

**K. Keen** commented on what Englerth was looking for was beyond the program at this point.

**K. Keen**– commented “The corridor doesn’t have shoulders that meets current standards. They are obligated to do that first, to deviate from that.... substandard issues exist. We would be incumbant to the Road Commission. We don’t have funding to just go thru and fix all these issues or even start with issues.”

**Englerth** inquired, “If the Road Commission came to you, MDOT, and said, “This is a priority,” and they were going to do their share, where would you guys be?” Keen commented, “I would issue them a permit to do it.”

**Englerth** asked, “Would you enhance any of the dollars?”

**K. Keen** commented that he would if he could. “We don’t have an operational line item budget that we could pick and choose.... there are so many of these small improvements you can make by just having the ability to do it, but he (A. Green) has 15 bosses above him...”

**P. Heystek** – inquired as to what it would take to have the speed limit drop during certain times, such as in a school zone.

**Keen** commented that law states the minimum posted speed limit is 15 mph and the school superintendent has to say there is a need. Keen commented on people blowing thru during the summertime because there’s no school. “Flashing lights- it doesn’t matter,” commented Kerwin Keen, “It’s because of inattentiveness or disregard that’s causing the speed in unsafe conditions.... So apart from the law changing, our hand has been given to us.”

**R. Heilman** commented on flashing lights during peak time in areas where it’s an accident waiting to happen.

**K. Keen** commented on a signal in Wyoming, on Chicago Drive. The signal was installed in the early 90’s. The sign activated when the kids went across. The rest of the day its on stand by. Police officers watched several times when cars blew thru during the active time. Keen gave further examples of speed violations including an incident in Saranac.

**A. Green** commented that MSP has the overarching umbrella for enforcement especially on a

Michigan route. Green added that 99.9% of the time, MDOT is completing reacting to how an area grows and changes. "The folks that are sitting in these chairs with name tags are the ones that ultimately drive the direction for the area by their land use, the allowance for development to move with type and kind, how many, with density - all that kind of thing. That's what you guys are giving the transportation facility for us to operate. We will partner, our job and our mission is very clear- is to be safe, to accommodate commerce, development and improve the quality of life. So we're going to do that, but what I can't do as a department for you is I can't make decisions on how you guys operate the access need from the facility. It would be great to say that every road that we own and operate was the first thing there. And we can just tell everybody what to do and how to access it because then the transportation facility would likely be more optimized..."

The discussion then led into the...

• **Access Management Plan**

A. Green commented, "There are things we (MDOT) can do incrementally that are not going to change how many cars drive by." A. Green also commented that the access management plan is a really good place to start. The M-179 Corridor Overlay Plan was mentioned. Green mentioned lower cost programs available for items such as right turn lanes. TAP (Transportation Alternative Program) was mentioned and the name of Amy Matisoff was noted as someone who can help with trail grants. Green noted that she (Amy M.) needs to see a reasonable plan, though. A. Matisoff works out of Lansing.

**M. Englerth** commented "If we met 3 or 4 times a year and started going thru this, Access Mgt is crucial. ...When you take commercial traffic off a highway and put it down a lane and a half, then yes, you do not have the fatality on the state highway. But when you are putting commercial traffic down Archwood or Parker, you're twice as apt to have a fatality there. So we need some experts... In the long term should the plan be widening it out? ... Should we have a turn lane on Parker next to the church? How do we fund that? The township gives the road commission x number of dollars a year on their recommendation. Do we enter into the discussion with the Road Commission? Do we say "Gee, people on Parker, people on Archwood, would you come up with \$70,000 if the township came up with some?...You can tell us what's best for our community."

**A. Green** commented that this is not necessarily a tennis match (going back and forth). "Having that plan and direction really helps spend time, money and resources in a particular direction favorably for everyone. They can see it and look at it and say, "I want this to be that way." Then pretty soon there's a little bit of peer pressure with all the businesses and all the other areas ... to make the plan happen.... The point is if it's something that you guys believe in and want to happen, we can start taking steps that way." Green added, "We can be here as a resource and help- that is all we can offer you." Green also added that nothing major will be done to M-179 for a long, long time. "It's not a road that has that type of characteristic. We can sustain it with its road quality as it is with making minor changes," noted Green. Green commented, "Unfortunately we are a little like your insurance company. We'll pay when the tree hits your house, but not beforehand." A. Green mentioned the possibility of putting a new surface on "quite a stretch" up to M-43 in 2019. Typical shoulders should be put back (8 ft.) unless there is reason not to.

**Other discussion: (Various Topics)**

**Heilman** – spoke of Drummond Island receiving a grant because they had a Heritage Road. It was noted that M-179 is considered a "Scenic byway" not a Heritage Road.

ACCESS MGT. PLAN

OTHER TOPICS

**Purcell** asked if it would be in violation if the township put something up that says in the summertime we recommend 45 mph.? (on the fire station sign).

**K.Keen** commented that he'd say any sign that assimilates a traffic control sign is not legal.

**Heystek** – inquired as to whether a motorized trail would have to go on private (property). “Is there enough room out there?” (M-179) inquired Heystek.

**Rottschafer** commented that there was not enough per Prein Newhof.

**Heilman** mentioned turn out lanes. Art Green noted the dangers of going around a car making a left turn. Green commented that they'd be looking more at a dedicated left turn lane. Heilman asked “Is there room for that?” Green explained the complications with 66' right of way.

**Rottschafer** asked about widening out the road to get past wetlands (for non-motorized trails). Rottschafer commented on an expensive bridge project to get over the wetland area.

**Art Green** – commented that with MDOT, that couldn't happen as part of a bike trail system. “As it exists today, that's your sidewalk,” commented Green.

**M. Englerth** asked “How do we start getting those meetings together? Four times a year? Are we going to have someone sit down with us?”

**Green** suggested that regarding the overlay corridor district plan, “I want you guys to dust it off and understand what it is and then call us. We'll come down with assistant planner, Steve Redmond. He's involved with a lot of rural areas and funding....He understands the funding piece and planning and can help you guys walk thru a little refresh of that. And then having that already done, it may be more economical to tackle as a committee rather than hiring another planning group and start over. You got a list started and you've got some real good ideas. You've got to organize what you have and what you want to look at. Now it's a matter of dusting it off, identify some data points.... The County is a good source (of information)... Then we sit down and start looking at that and we could possibly pair up with a project .... Again, it is a capital improvement project, it is not a reconstruct project....They're meant to be one course projects - not reconstructive.... not our rehab template.”

**J. Lippert** asked to go back to the 55 mph question/M-179. Lippert asked “How many feet apart do you place the signs?”

**Green** commented that the standard through out the state is every one of the speed studies are blocked out in enforcement zones based on the study. Every sign indicates where the 55 or 45 mph is all set up and documented by mileage and distance. Some of the signs may have not changed for a long, long time- maybe from the 1940's.

**M. Varano** commented regarding M-179, “In the last three weeks they've been cutting trees down. They have got their work construction speed limits – 45 mph is very nice and traffic hasn't slowed down. It's been kind of nice to drive that road. (from Payne Lake to Patterson).” Varano felt that the 45 mph work zone speed limit has worked pretty well.

**Englerth** - asked to sit down with MDOT and their person from Lansing and talk about the Trails. Englerth mentioned having a state park with 1.5 million visitors, having an ice cream store and a McDonald's. “How do we balance all this out? How do we get there from here?” asked Englerth.

**Green** advised the township to bite off one or two things first – “Be on the same page first. The department is not going to walk in and tell you what to do. The department (MDOT) wants to help you get where you think you want to go.”

**Englerth** mentioned the township also needs a little bit of expertise – “When you look at some of the old gas stations –and building a new gas station next to it and then you have 250 ft. of driveways....”

**Green** commented “The township honestly has total control... When we give you comments, it’s the township’s decision if it goes in.... We want to be there to see the transportation is as good as it can be.”

**Keen** commented “The Planning Commission’s power is more than they think.... The power of suggestion that you have when you review your site plan reviews-ask for it... your ability to say ‘it’d be nice’ is interpreted as ‘this is required’.”

**Green** added “And what you ask has to be well founded. MDOT’s view is always something to go back to.... You really are diverting then that stuff to our shoulders indirectly...”

**C. Strickland** inquired “Where do we find best practices?” K. Keen from MDOT gave a manual to C. Strickland and noted that it was on line as well.

**Green** referred to the manual for identifying existing uses and future uses for developing a plan for access management.

**A. Jansma** (going back to the church) inquired “What about a deceleration lane – not a left turn lane?”

**Green** commented on a determined right (more voluntary) to go into the driveway. More complicated would be dedicating space in the center of road for a left turn and Green calculated (55 mph times movement (move over space) 6 feet = 330 ft. move over space plus storage space (250 ft.) and came up with a project about 600 feet long noting that with such a project –putting it in the middle of the road, “You are talking about a six figure project.”

**S. VandenBerg** asked if MDOT had to do a study for the left turn lane.

**Green** answered “If this is a retro-active thing, it’s very challenging....”

**Green** also commented “The time to hit this is when the church expands... when the church comes in.... then say ‘now is the time to turn this into MDOT’.”

**Green** commented that both MSP and MDOT have to agree on speed limit, but MDOT does the engineering/geometry of the road.

**VandenBerg** asked “If the board was concerned with GLCC (church) – would YS Twp. board have to pay for this study?”

**Green** commented that if it wasn’t required of the church previously, the township would be obligated with the cost.

**Rottschafer** commented that the township could go to 911 reports. MDOT says they can pull accidents (reports).

**F. Fiala** commented on proven studies for speed limits being in place, and possibly doing other items or projects to make it more convenient and for the road to be safe.

• **Procedure to eliminate “Jake Braking” at the Intersection of M-179 & Briggs Rd.**

**K. Keen** addressed compression braking noting there’s a potential to post a sign (temporarily) to prohibit the use of compression braking or recommend the non-use of - There has to be several steps to be taken to get the signage to happen. Maximum decimal ratings are involved in this noise issue so that makes it an enforcement issue – and how do you get an officer of law there during the incident?

**Green** commented there’s work that would have to be done. It’s not a “No”, and there is always a way to get it done. Green previously commented that the issue of compression breaking isn’t really a traffic (MDOT) issue. The effort to enforce this requires measurement, and law officers have to have ability to make a ticket stick.

**Englerth** commented that K. Keen is going to be the contact for access management and the other contract is Amy Matisoff, out of Lansing, for Trails.

**Rottschafer** commented on having Prein & Newhof come in first and develop questions for Amy Matisoff .

**Green** commented that Amy Matisoff is very good and can help with trail grants noting A. Matisoff needs to see a plan though, a reasonable plan because the grants are very competitive.

**Heilman** commented on prioritizing and making sure to know what’s the first thing is that you want to deal with.

**Green** added “You are going to spider off when you sit down. Don’t lose your focus.”

**J. Lippert** inquired as to whom can we (the township) send our corridor study to? It was determined that the study was in the ordinance.

**M. Englerth** thanked the MDOT reps, K. Keen and A. Green, for coming.

At this time, Greg Purcell passed out copies of the Proposed Amendment to the Planning Commission by-Laws and Rules of Procedure to those involved in the joint meeting. The copy was not something that would be discussed this evening, but should be read.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 8:20 p.m., Jansma motioned to adjourn with support from Englerth. Approved by all.

Respectfully submitted      Approved Date: APPROVED Sept. 14, 2017  
D. Mousseau  
Recording Secretary      Janice C. Lippert, Clerk \_\_\_\_\_  
8.22.17

**ADJOURNMENT**