

SUMMARY OF RTE 45 DISCUSSION @ VILLAGE BOARD MEETING
June 16, 2009

INTRODUCTION

- 1) **LETTERS FROM RESIDENTS:** The presentation started with the Board acknowledging the letters and emails they had received. Mike Allison provided the board with a summary of the concerns and copies of the letter. [Side note: Our petition was definitely known by the board—all nodding heads when I mentioned it in the context of a question I posed!].
- 2) **DEFINITION OF THREE PHASES:** John from IDOT walked through some background info, including definition of the three phases of the project. We are in phase one, called Preliminary Engineering Phase, which generally takes 36-48 months. This is the phase where input is received on safety concerns, access needs, drainage, noise, etc. They confirmed that they are conducting a noise study, which will be completed in early 2010. Phase 2 is the design phase where plans are finalized and bidding documents are pulled together. This usually takes 18-24 months. Phase 3 is construction. For a project like this, they will do it in segments and it is estimated to take 18 months.
- 3) **RATIONALE FOR EXPANSION:** IDOT outlined the ‘why’ behind the expansion, citing a study done in 2002 that identified that roughly 22,600 cars travel on rte 45 on a daily basis. Most two lane roads don’t exceed 14, 000 – 18,000 cars/day. Members of the audience pushed back on the fact that the study was conducted in 2002—before the expansion of Half Day and before the opening of Fariway. Some on the Village Board doubted this would make a difference given that traffic naturally increases every year and the chance that changes/additions to roads reduced the traffic by 8,000+ cars was doubtful. The IDOT rep said he would check for a more recent study.
- 4) **RESIDENT PREFERENCES:** IDOT shared results of a survey from 2003 of 39 Vernon Hills residents responding to questions on preferences for sound walls vs. berm, median vs. no median and need for additional landscaping as a results of a rte 45 expansion. I think we made it clear that this outdated survey with a limited population size wasn’t really something they should base decisions on.

ISSUES EFFECTING CC RIGHT OF WAY

- 1) **CEMETARY:** It was confirmed that there are marked graves and unmarked paupers' graves at the property line of the cemetery. There is a state statue on moving graves that is very, very difficult to get around. In addition, it is a very complex, time and money consuming process to move graves. One Village Board Members specifically stated that she would not support disturbing the graves in any way.
- 2) **OTHER PROPERTIES ON SOUTH SIDE:** Between Fairway and Deerpath, there is only one home that is not owned by the Village. They noted that they are 'working on' taking ownership of this house. It was noted that there is a surplus of green space surrounding the train station parking lot that could easily be used for right of way.
- 3) **MEDIAN:** The current plan calls for a raised barrier median, 22 feet wide. Raised medians are put in place to reduce risk of head on collision, to control traffic speeds, to help with drainage and for aesthetic purposes. There was much discussion on the need for a median and the upkeep required for a raised median. They also discussed a non-raised median. The advantages to this type of median is that there is no upkeep, but still helps with safety in that it facilitates 2-step left-hand turns. Options discussed were elimination of the median, or reduction to 16 or 12 foot median, to minimize impact on property.
- 4) **PATHS:** The current plan calls for paths on both side of the road. The one on the northside would be expanded from 6 feet (current) to 10 feet. Again, options discussed to minimize impact to CC included elimination of the path on the south side, and keeping the path at it's current width.
- 5) **TREES:** The Village is assessing the tree along our neighborhood now. IDOT mentioned that an option that might save more trees would be to keep the path a 'menadering' path (as it is now) versus a path that runs along side the road.

OTHER IMPACTS ON CC

- 1) **BARRIER:** In the current plan, there is no barrier—berm or fence. The nature of the barrier warranted will be decided after the noise study and with input from the community. We expressed on several occasions that the barrier must ensure safety, sound and aesthetics of our neighborhood. There seems to be some initial consensus by CC residents that a berm would be preferable. It was requested that if IDOT will not fund this, that the Village fund it. There was also talk of possible retaining walls where homes are on a higher grade than the road currently.
- 2) **LOWERING THE ROAD:** One Village Board member brought up the possibility of lowering the road in spots . IDOT responded that this was a possibility, but that drainage could be an issue.

OTHER IMPACTS ON CC, continued

- 3) CC AS A CUT THOROUGH: Village acknowledges this—it is by design and it will continue, as Stone Fence residents will most likely have to use our light to turn-left when the road is expanded. No plans to close off opening to Stone Fence or in any way provide them different access.
- 4) SPEEDING: Mentioned by several residents. The Chief of Police was there. Trustee Koch mentioned they now have 'stealth' technology to track speeding and a study using this technology is being conducted in our neighborhood.
- 5) PAYMENT FOR RIGHT OF WAY: IDOT's practice for purchasing any right of way is to assess the property, fence, landscaping, etc. and pay the owner (they will not replace things, but offer monetary payment for owner to replace).
- 6) COMMUNICATION TO RESIDENTS AT TIME OF HOME PURCHASE: Two residents expressed frustration in knowing about the possible expansion at the time they purchased their homes. One mentioned that the letter they signed mentioned possible expansion, but not possible impact to their property. The other mentioned they a Village representative verbally told them that the expansion would "bring the road 5 feet closer, at most."

OTHER SPECS OF NEW ROAD

- 1) SIGNALS: There are no plans to add signals at Stone Fence or at Corporate Woods. For Stone Fence, the spacing is too close to the light at Deerpath. For Corporate Woods, the businesses in this complex would have to fund the light and so far they have refused. IDOT hopes that more lanes will mean better flow, which will eliminate the bottleneck at Corporate Woods in the evening rush hour.
- 2) SPEED LIMIT: IDOT plans to keep the speed limit at 45 mph.

DISPUTING EFFECTIVENESS OF EXPANSION

- 1) RAILROAD TRACKS: A resident noted that unless the timing of railroad gates is fixed, the bottleneck will continue by the tracks. There are currently no plans to go under or over the tracks. To go over would mean starting as far back at Stone Fence to Evergreen, impacting or eliminating property. Going under is also out of the question, do to fuel lines that run underneath the road.

DISPUTING EFFECTIVENESS OF EXPANSION, continued

- 2) Traffic, like water, finds the path of least resistance (the words of the IDOT representative). As one resident pointed out, this means traffic will be diverted from the stoplight infested Route 60 to the widened Route 45. Not only would this minimize any gains an expansion would create, it would take traffic out of the commercial tax base of the village.
- 3) Without widening Olde Half Day, the bottlenecks will continue. IDOT indicated that this small stretch of road is as expanded as it will ever be, due to the presence of wetlands, the Forest Preserve and even archeological issues (Indian grounds!). Milwaukee will be expanded to include two right hand turn lanes and two left hand turn lanes to encourage people to use Half day instead of Olde Half Day.

MISCELLANEOUS

- 1) It was noted that this expansion only magnifies the need to monitor speed, red lights (especially at Ranney) and U-turns from train station on Ranney. Residents asked that this be monitored as closely as Lincolnshire monitors Half Day.
- 2) An Indian Creek resident expressed concern that Indian Creek has declared that they don't have the funds to continue the path through their section along rte 45. IDOT stated that they typically fund paths 50/50, so the price of this 1200 ft stretch of concrete shouldn't be insurmountable for Indian Creek.
- 3) Not clear there is funding for this beyond phase 2 for this project.

NEXT STEPS:

- 1) The Village will send a 'strongly worded' (per Mike Allison) letter to IDOT expressing concerns and preferences to minimize impact on the north side of the road. The Village will 'cc' the CCHOA.
- 2) IDOT will share plans with the village in early 2010. They will also hold a public meeting in that same time frame. At that time, the plans will be 80-90% finalized.