

?Commissioners discuss Sparksville Road dilemma

Written by

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?? ?The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in regular session Wednesday afternoon. Commissioners Lana Sullivan and Byron Green were present; Commissioner Mike Goering was absent. The minutes of previous meetings and all claims were approved, 2-0.

The Board heard from Donovan Gordon and Lonnie Brown, owners of the property on either side of the Sparksville Road in northern Washington County. Both Gordon and Brown expressed their concerns about what can only be described as an inadequate design of the road leading to the bridge crossing the White River. According to Gordon, the wrong size of concrete box culvert was used and that is part of the problem.

The Commissioners agreed to repair the fields and to replace the road surface with gravel until a permanent solution can be implemented.

The road, built in 2006, has suffered major flood damage three times since it was opened.

Sullivan announced that the Washington County Community Foundation will host an event on Wednesday, July 9, at 1 p.m. at the Community Learning Center for the purpose of getting \$100,000 for disaster relief. Sullivan admitted that would only be a short term fix for the problem. According to Sullivan, the long term solution is a redesign of the road and that Congressman Baron Hill is involved in getting that funding included in the Congressional Budget for next year.

Besides damage to the road, Brown and Gordon estimated that out of the forty acres they own, approximately 3-4 of those acres get damaged every time it floods. The county is responsible for repairing that damage by removing road debris and replacing the topsoil washed away by the water rushing over and under the roadway.

The Board approved Laura Dixon's request to go forward with the grant process for the Posey County Water Project and approval for the release of funds for that project.

In other business, the Board heard from Helen Trumble regarding the purchase of property that was sold at tax auction. The Commissioners directed Trumble to the appropriate county office and gave her advice on how to proceed with the purchase process.

Washington County Highway Superintendent, Rick Graves, reported to the Board that Bridge No. 60 on Harristown Road had some safety issues that need to be addressed. Graves also reported that paving work has been completed in District 3. Graves went on to report that due to escalating price of asphalt, there will have to be significant cuts made in the amount of roads paved throughout the county in the future. According to Graves,

the price for paving one mile of road has risen from \$27,000 to over \$62,000 in just a couple of years.

Newly appointed County Auditor, Jason Cockerill and Christine Hensley gave the Commissioners an update on the assessing process and noted that the anticipated August deadline will not be met but it will be close. According to Cockerill, more staff and more space in necessary. Cockerill suggested that shift work for employees in the Assessor's Office may be the best solution.

County Auditor, Sarah Bachman said that she would like to avoid provisional tax billing because of the problems it creates with the county's software as well as the added expense.

Commissioner Sullivan reported that another bid for the restoration work on the courthouse has been received from Keystone Restoration and she broke down the bid information into its component parts. No action was taken on the project by the Commissioners.

With no further business to conduct, the Board adjourned until its next regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, July 16.