

January 16, 2015

A Special Meeting of the Scandia Planning Commission was held on the above date. The purpose of the meeting was to receive the recommendation from the Log House Landing Improvement Project Committee and determine if the design for the Log House Landing roadway meets the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Christine Maefsky called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. The following were in attendance: Commissioners Jan Hogle, Travis Loffler, Steve Philippi, Dan Squyres and Chair Christine Maefsky. Staff present: City Administrator Kristina Handt, Public Works Director Tim Kieffer and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund. Mayor Randall Simonson and City Council member Chris Ness were also in attendance.

Chair Maefsky, who chaired the Log House Landing Improvement Project Committee, began with a review of the series of nine meetings the advisory Committee held since October 2014. Washington County Engineer Wayne Sandberg and County staff facilitated the meetings beginning in December 2014. The Committee concluded their meetings on January 15th with a recommendation for improvements to 205th Street and the landing to the St. Croix River for review by the Planning Commission.

Pam Plowman-Smith, a member of the Committee, provided a historical account of the Landing and stated that it's the community's desire to preserve the rustic beauty and rural character of the site. She stated that the Friends of the Log House Landing have encouraged that the road remain gravel, but a compromise was reached among the Committee members which would preserve the contours of the road and allow the least vegetative disruption and runoff into the river.

Chair Maefsky described the evaluation process which the Committee used to arrive at a recommendation for the improvement project. Using weighted criteria to evaluate the needs and concerns such as erosion, access, safety, maintenance and cost, the Committee came to a consensus on the design of the project based on four potential designs.

Maefsky reported the recommendation as a single, paved 13' wide surface with curb and gutter and storm sewer located on the south side of the roadway. Two pullouts would be located on the south side of the roadway and designed with an asphalt surface, with the option of moving the west pullout to the north side if necessary to preserve trees. Parking on the north side of the landing would be restricted to non-trailer parking with a pervious surface. An ADA parking stall should be considered and was shown on the diagram near the boat landing. The landing itself should only be paved if essential for protecting water quality with the use of natural stones and rocks for reinforcement of the bank areas. Additional recommendations for signage and future use provisions were described. The Committee included that the project be allowed community review and input at the 60% completion point. Maefsky explained that the Committee hovered between a recommendation for the minimal design option and the single gravel 13' roadway, but chose this paved design as most likely to be approved by the Council. The Committee has requested that they be allowed to work with the DNR on revising the project for the grant funding.

Steve Kronmiller, Committee member, stated his concern about the letter from Fire Chief Mike Hinz which recommended a minimum 20-foot wide roadway from Quinnell to the end of 205th Street. Hinz based this on the national fire code regulations for apparatus placement and firefighter safety. Kronmiller provided a map showing one house along 205th with the other houses being accessed by Quint Avenue. He questioned the increased cost and environmental impacts of widening the entire road for one house.

Administrator Handt pointed out that the department uses the landing for emergency rescue calls to the river and staging of multiple rescue vehicles is critical on the landing area for safe passage. The William O'Brien landing is not winter accessible and away from the main river channel.

Steve Bubl, legal consultant for Friends of the Log House Landing, stated that the public safety concern had not been an issue for the road improvements and it seems to have ballooned into these other concerns. Safety needs to be balanced with meeting the Comprehensive Plan goal to keep the rural character of the area.

Smith stated that in speaking with DNR engineers, they were comfortable with a narrower road since it is considered a low-usage park road and there is adequate visibility between the pullouts.

Commissioner Loffler stated that addressing safety issues should be a concern in the reconstruction of the roadway; if spending the money, it should be done right the first time. He stated that it should be a two-lane road with increased parking so that more people may enjoy the site.

Maefsky countered that users love it because it is a rustic and historic site and it should not be developed into a likeness of William O'Brien State Park. The policy of the National Park Service is to not increase parking along the riverway, and this is the approach that the Committee took.

Commissioner Hogle stated that not a lot of people use the landing at the same time; its low use is what makes the site unique. Hogle noted that the pullouts add to the safety but did question if people might use the pullouts as parking areas. She liked the idea of a single lane roadway which keeps to the character of the area, whereas a two-lane road would change the character too much.

Commissioner Squyres agreed and stated that the difficult access is part of the charm; paving will increase usage. He asked what is "doing it right" mean? He sees it as fixing the erosion. Squyres said that he would prefer it remain gravel, but the recommendation is a compromise. A two-lane road could result in the use skyrocketing. He stated that a gravel road more than meets the goals of the Comp Plan other than protection of water quality.

Commissioner Philippi, LHL Committee member, stated that he preferred the minimal design option. The site doesn't need to be a mini William O'Brien. The road will no longer appear rustic and rural with curb and gutter, but there would be no way to improve the water quality of the river without replacing the gravel roadway with pavement. The recommendation came about

as a bargain made by the Committee, but is by no means the ideal design for most of the Committee members.

Lisa Schlingerman, 20661 Quint Avenue, stated that in the 32 years she has lived there, there have been less than 5 fire incidents. These were accessed by fire trucks and all were put out without any problems. Quint Avenue from 205th Street to Quinnell is a private road which the residents will maintain for accessibility to the houses.

Squyres, seconded by Hogle, moved to approve the recommendation of the Log House Landing Improvement Committee as presented and endorse the recommendation based on meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The motion carried 5-0.

Squyres, seconded by Hogle, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk