

MINUTES OF THE HOWLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Howland Township Board of Trustees held their regular meeting virtually on March 10, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. via the Howland Township Web Page www.howlandtownship.org

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch -yea
Dr. James LaPolla -yea
Rick Clark -yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Matthew Vansuch to excuse Fiscal Officer Robert Costello for personal reasons.

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch -yea
Dr. James LaPolla -yea
Rick Clark -yea

A motion was made by Matthew Vansuch and seconded by Dr. James LaPolla to suspend the reading of February 24, 2020 meeting minutes and accept as written.

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch -yea
Dr. James LaPolla -yea
Rick Clark -yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Matthew Vansuch to authorize Fiscal Officer Robert Costello to pay all outstanding invoices incurred and approve all warrants issued.

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch -yea
Dr. James LaPolla -yea
Rick Clark -yea

A motion was made by Matthew Vansuch and seconded by Dr. James LaPolla to vote on Resolution 2021-030:

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George, approve to contract Alexander Pest Control for the 2021 Mosquito Spraying Program. The following dates are scheduled.

May 17th and 18th June 14th and 15th July 12th and 13th
August 9th and 10th September 13th and 14th

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch -yea
Dr. James LaPolla -yea
Rick Clark -yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Matthew Vansuch to vote on Resolution 2021-031:

WHEREAS, the following property has been cited during the month of March 2021 in violation of the Howland Township Zoning Ordinance Section 8.01, B, H, Howland

Township Resolution 2003-58 (Abatement, Control or Removal of Vegetation, Garbage, Refuse or Other Debris); and

WHEREAS Howland Township has received complaints from neighbors of said property that the condition interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of use of the property, and high grass and/or garbage, refuse, or debris poses a safety and health threat to the neighborhood. The unsightly appearance of the property is detrimental to the aesthetic value of the neighborhood and would cause a depreciation of property values; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Office has not heard from any of the property owners by telephone or mail.

WHEREAS, At least seven days before providing for the abatement, control, or removal of any vegetation, garbage, refuse, or other debris, the board of township trustees shall notify the owner of the land and any holders of liens of record upon the land that the owner is ordered to abate, control, or remove the vegetation, garbage, refuse, or other debris, the owner's maintenance of which has been determined by the board to be a nuisance.

WHEREAS, If that vegetation, garbage, refuse, or other debris is not abated, controlled, or removed, or if provision for its abatement, control, or removal is not made, within seven days, the board shall provide for the abatement, control, or removal. Any expenses incurred by the board in performing that task shall be entered upon the tax duplicate and become a lien upon the land from the date of entry.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Howland Township declares and finds the following property to be a nuisance.

2878 Niles Vienna Road Parcel ID: 28-573401

Roll Call:	Matthew Vansuch	-yea
	Dr. James LaPolla	-yea
	Rick Clark	-yea

A motion was made by Matthew Vansuch and seconded by Dr. James LaPolla to vote on Resolution 2021-032:

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George and Planning Director Kim Mascarella, approve the following *Storm water Drainage Facility Inspection and Maintenance Agreements*. The agreements outline the property owner's responsibilities in the long- term operation and maintenance of the storm-water management facilities associated development projects in the Township. They are:

1. Storm Water Drainage Facility Inspection and Maintenance Agreement between Howland Township and the TLC Insurance Group and Wealth Inc., Parcel ID #28-463500, property address of 8775 East Market Street, Warren Ohio 44484.
2. Storm Water Drainage Facility Inspection and Maintenance Agreement between Howland Township and D&F Management Properties, Parcel ID #28-691450, property address 1955 Niles Cortland Road NE, Warren Ohio 44484.

3. Storm Water Drainage Facility Inspection and Maintenance Agreement between Howland Township and Three C S Inc., Parcel ID# 28-205450, property address 1210 Niles Cortland Road NE, Warren, Ohio 44484.
4. Storm Water Drainage Facility Inspection and Maintenance Agreement between Howland Township and the St. Mary and St. John, the Beloved Monastery, Parcel ID# 28-006517, property address 8640 Squires Lane, Warren, Ohio 44484.
5. Storm Water Drainage Facility Inspection and Maintenance Agreement between Howland Township and the Howland Methodist Church, Parcel ID #28-006504, property address of 730 Howland Wilson Road, Warren Ohio 44484.

Roll Call:

Matthew Vansuch	-yea
Dr. James LaPolla	-yea
Rick Clark	-yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Matthew Vansuch to vote on Resolution 2021-033:

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George and Fire Chief James Pantalone, hire the following as part-time Firefighters effective March 16, 2021. They will be scheduled on an as need basis with no benefits.

Jordan Gibbs	PT Firefighter/Paramedic	\$ 12.72 per hr.
Tyler Nicholls	PT Firefighter/Paramedic	\$ 12.72 per hr.
Haley Martin	PT Firefighter/EMT	\$ 12.39 per hr.

Roll Call:

Matthew Vansuch	-yea
Dr. James LaPolla	-yea
Rick Clark	-yea

A motion was made by Matthew Vansuch and seconded by Dr. James LaPolla to vote on Resolution 2021-034:

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George and Fire Chief James Pantalone, remove the following from the Fire Department's part-time employee roster effective March 1, 2021.

Matthew Rozhon	Firefighter/EMT
Gary Stewart	Firefighter/EMT

Roll Call:

Matthew Vansuch	-yea
Dr. James LaPolla	-yea
Rick Clark	-yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Matthew Vansuch to vote on Resolution 2021-035:

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George and Fire Chief James Pantalone, remove the following instructors from the Howland Township Fire & EMS Training Center's roster effective March 1, 2021.

Don Bryant Justin Martin Edward Smith

Roll Call:	Matthew Vansuch	-abstain
	Dr. James LaPolla	-yea
	Rick Clark	-yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Matthew Vansuch to vote on Resolution 2021-036:

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George and Fire Chief James Pantalone, accept the resignation of full-time Firefighter/Paramedic Lucas Kuzma for personal reasons effective April 5, 2021. Luke's last day of employment is April 4, 2021.

Roll Call:	Matthew Vansuch	-yea
	Dr. James LaPolla	-yea
	Rick Clark	-yea

A motion was made by Matthew Vansuch and seconded by Dr. James LaPolla to vote on Resolution 2021-037:

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George and Fire Chief James Pantalone, approve to apply for the following grants;

State of Ohio 2021-2022 P1-Training & Equipment Grant.
OTARMA 2021 Police and Fire Grant

Roll Call:	Matthew Vansuch	-yea
	Dr. James LaPolla	-yea
	Rick Clark	-yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Matthew Vansuch to vote on Resolution 2021-038:

Authorize Fiscal Officer Robert Costello to advertise for bids for the OPWC 2021 Road Resurfacing Program through the Trumbull County Engineer.

Roll Call:	Matthew Vansuch	-yea
	Dr. James LaPolla	-yea
	Rick Clark	-yea

Summary of Meeting:

Trustee Rick Clark

Matt, do you have anything you want to discuss this evening?

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Yes, just two things. I had a conversation with a resident down on Castillion. As you know it's that time of year when the waters start coming and so Castillion is seeing some wet backyards back there. I know I'll be talking to Dave about that but I think it's going to be a larger project than simply trying to clean out some ditches down there. We have issues with Mosquito Creek wetlands accepting water so I know we've been talking about it for a few years so were following up on that.

I had a nice conversation with Andrea Ferenac, the activities director, and Steve Pappalas from the Trumbull County Engineer's office about posting some signs to recognize school team state championships. It looks like they'll be moving forward together on that. I believe the booster club is going to be paying for all that so it's not an expense that they're asking the Township to pay for or the school district either so that'll be nice. That's all I have.

Administrator Darlene St. George

Matt, I just want to follow up. David can't be here tonight but he called me prior to the meeting to let me know that he and Gary Schaffer from the County Engineer's office went back in the waterway behind Castillion. The problem back there seems to be on the park property, which is causing some backups so at this point in time, they're going to be talking with the park about what can be done. They believe it's an easy fix. It may not involve getting the Army Corps of Engineers or the EPA involved. It just may be something that park needs to do on their own property, so they're going to be discussing that with them and seeing if they can put together a plan to fix that.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

That would be great news and that's the best news you can hear about that. Thank you very much.

Trustee Rick Clark

Jim anything you want to discuss?

Trustee Dr. James LaPolla

Yes, just one item that's an update for everybody based on the electric transfer from Niles electric to Ohio Edison. Lisa Tadaï has been in contact with the Township, and basically utilizing the data we gave them in terms of the residents' locations and electric bills. They are basically looking at the load limits in different parts of the Township, which is going to help them determine conversion and if they can't do it what problems need to be solved. Basically, they're taking the first steps to putting together a plan they can present somewhere down the future but they're looking at the load limits as of right now based upon the data received. so that's where things stand as of right now.

Trustee Rick Clark

Thank you. Mrs. St George anything?

Administrator Darlene St. George

Nothing right now.

Trustee Rick Clark

Okay. All right. Chief Pantalone, do you have a report tonight?

Fire Chief James Pantalone

Just a couple things. If you follow us on social media you can see that the crews have been out the last couple of weeks. We're getting back into some training regimen, outflowing some water and getting out into the community a little bit. It's been a long year where we've been kind of cooped up in the bad weather as well. So, we're happy the crews are out and about and see them doing some different trainings. This week we had three members attend a free class over in Portage County for rescue Task Force training. This training would complement a majority of other members on the department with incidents, high level hostile incidents that all of our people will be trained properly to work in combination with Chief Roberts and his crew should we have any type of hostile incidents where we've got to do law enforcement and EMS. That was provided to us through Portage County and EMA operation. So, that was free. It was two eight-hour days.

It is that time of year again with spring. That means spring cleanup so I want to remind everybody about open burning rules. We will be throwing some posts out there on social media as well. Just because it needs cleaned up doesn't mean you can light it up. So please, take a look at the rules within the guidelines of EPA. Certainly, everybody's itching to get out of their yards but this is usually the season where we start getting a little busy with open burning. Please pay attention to the outside environment and if you're going to burn within the confines, please make sure it's not a windy day. Calm clear days are usually the best. Any questions?

Trustee Rick Clark

I just like to compliment Lieutenant Pace on being accepted in the Ohio Fire Executive Academy. That's a one-year program and I've been fortunate enough to go to graduation for that in Columbus on three different occasions. It's quite a program and I'm sure he'll do fine and represent Howland Township well.

Fire Chief James Pantalone

He was accepted for the Ohio Fire Executive Program. It's actually a five session, two-and-a-half-year program with a very large research project. Yes, Rick, you were there to attend my graduation. He also received a grant to help offset our costs for the program. There are some training dollars that we'll be able to apply. It's a great program for somebody looking to excel in leadership and we're excited for him.

Trustee Rick Clark

Good. Congratulations. Chief Roberts?

Police Chief Nick Roberts

As of March 1, Officer Matthew Bartolec completed his field training. He's now on solo patrol. One of his biggest obstacles was learning the streets in the Township and the businesses. He's progressing nicely. He's doing a good job for us and he'll be a great asset for our police department.

Secondly, we're once again taking the unemployment identity theft reports. The State Patrol was taking them for a while, but I think they got inundated with calls. So now they're asking each community to go ahead and take their own identity theft reports. If we are able to identify any suspects or individuals involved in these cases, we will certainly turn that information over to the State.

Trustee Rick Clark

Any questions for the Chief? I know both departments I'm sure, had a difficult assignment on Saturday with the accident on 82 and Howland Wilson. Those things are never easy to work through. I know it's become quite a topic in the Township recently, and that intersection and possible changes going forward, I'm sure, will influence the State's decision in some fashion. Thank you Chief.

Kim, planning director?

Planning Director Kim Mascarella

I really don't have an update for tonight; I guess I did want to remind everybody about those online tools. I think I touched on it at the last meeting, but the zoning lookup tool from our website if you select the zoning tab and the map gallery, there is another environmental resource map that you can enter your address. Then if you look at the legend, you can see if you're within the 100-year floodplain or 500-year floodplain or if there are hydric soils or wetlands. It'll give you a good idea about some of the environmental resources or hazards that may be affecting your property. That's also another lookup tool that we're working with the county planning commission on better in allowing our residents and development community to kind of gather information themselves.

That's all.

Trustee Rick Clark

Thank you. Anything for Kim? Dan Zoning Director.

Yes, since our last meeting, the zoning Department has issued 11 permits that had a project cost of \$397,000. The property owners are investing back into their property.

Other than that, I would like to remind our residents, before they place a piece of furniture or a mattress out curbside for garbage pickup, please contact your garbage provider to arrange to have that item picked up. That will help ensure that it doesn't sit there for weeks on end. Then we won't receive calls and have to send out violation notices. So, if you call your garbage provider prior to

putting it to the curb, they will be aware that it needs picked up. They will also let you know what their guidelines are for putting that furniture or mattress out.

That is all I have.

Trustee Rick Clark

Thank you. Do you have any questions for Dan?

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

At the monastery, are they going to be taking down their construction fence?

Zoning Director Dan Morgan

Yes, we are having a public BZA hearing on April 1. They are asking for a variance to place a six-foot fence in the front and side yard. It will be more of an ornamental fence and will be taking the construction fence down.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Great, thank you.

Trustee Dr. James LaPolla

The only thing I would say is that I was talking to Matt one day, socially driving around without any snow on the ground, and I was making a very positive comment that I'm finally getting to see all the permits and the hard work that you have done with our local businesses and homeowners. So, I want to give you a pat on the back for the hard work you're doing to get some of these permits through and the extensions and improvements. I want to recognize you and Kim for your hard work on that aspect, you guys are a team.

Zoning Director Dan Morgan

We work a lot together.

Trustee Rick Clark

Good. Just to piggyback a little bit on what Dan said, we did get our schedule from the Trumbull Geauga Solid Waste District. If you go on their website, you can see the community events they have this year. Some of them are document shredding, hazardous waste collection, drug take-back day on May 1, electronics and appliance collection every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. And some scrap tire collection information.

Trustee Dr. James LaPolla

Hey Rick, are we going to set up shred day next meeting, or do we have any idea when that is?

Trustee Rick Clark

We can set it up next meeting. I forget exactly what day it was last year.

Trustee Dr. James LaPolla

We had to move it because of the virus and stuff.

Administrator Darlene St. George

We usually have it in May.

Trustee Rick Clark

Earth day or earth day weekend, I believe.

Administrator Darlene St. George

That'd be April but I think we've been having it in May. I don't have a flyer. Do you have a flyer in front of you Rick? When is Geauga having theirs?

Trustee Rick Clark

The document paper shredding is April 10.

Administrator Darlene St. George

We may want to have ours in May.

Trustee Dr. James LaPolla

Okay, I know it is sometime after-tax time for the reason people can shred all their stuff. Okay, that's fine I just didn't want to forget about it.

Trustee Rick Clark

No, we'll set it at the next meeting.

David's not here this evening he couldn't be here. Did he needed to pass along anything Dar?

Administrator Darlene St. George

Just about Castillion.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Is he going to do limb and branch in the spring?

Administrator Darlene St. George

Yes, we'll be setting that at the next meeting as well. Wait, maybe we have.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Yeah, it's usually like the second week of April.

Administrator Darlene St. George

Give me a second, I'll tell you what it is. Okay.

I see Linda's on the call. Linda do you know when it is?

Linda Vanelli

I don't think he set it yet Dar, but it usually sometime about the third week in April. Last year it was a little bit later, it was kind of the last week or two. Then it goes the west side, usually the first two weeks in May.

Trustee Rick Clark

Excellent. Now's the time we open the meeting up. Does anyone has any comments or questions for any of us or department heads? You need to identify yourself and give your address.

Would you give me your name and address for the record? Mr. Gump.

Bruce Gump

Yes, my name is Bruce Gump. Addresses 1441 Springwood Trace. So, my question, and issue is and I asked Darlene to make sure this was something we could bring up tonight is about the relocation of Howland Springs Road. Bring it out across the street from Kenyan by the Dunkin Donuts. Especially with that horrible accident out near 82 and Howland Wilson. I'm kind of guessing that this is a done deal, it's going to happen. But that is unquestionably going to put a significantly larger load on to route 46. I did speak to the person from the website at the State. He said we're aware that's going to cause more accidents on 46 but there'll be lower speed accidents and so there'll be fewer fatalities. They're aware that they're making the changes that they're making. In fact, going to cause more accidents and one way to help to reduce those accidents, would be to control the traffic coming down from this side of 82 under 46. By having the road further away from the entrance at Sam's Club and also placing a traffic light there ideally with a protected left turn, for turning on to Howland Springs or Kenyon. Another thought that we did pass on to the State that I thought both Chiefs might appreciate is and the State seems to appreciate it also, was to extend the entrance ramp from route 46 to combine with the exit ramp on Howland Wilson. If emergency vehicles did need to get into that section quickly, they wouldn't have to merge onto 82 and then merge back off again onto the exit ramp and Howland Wilson. It would make life a lot easier for everybody and it would provide another alternate method, even though it's right turns only onto Howland Wilson. So, they seem to appreciate that idea and I won't take any credit, it was my wife who came up with that. It just happens you know she is so good at stuff like this it's just normal for her. She always claims teamwork, but it's really her. So anyway, I know that there was a plan some time ago, to move Howland Springs to relocate it to come down there by the by the restaurants. Is there any possibility that that plan could be moved up? I realized that funds would be unavailable but I think we have a connection with East Gate Council of Governments, along the way here that we might be able to help and I think maybe even the Chamber of Commerce might help with that and it would make the traffic flow better on route 46. When the new diverging diamond gets put in that's going to make traffic flow smoother, I think, based on my own experience with the diverging diamond that means that there'll be fewer openings to make turns from Howland Springs because traffic will be flowing more evenly. I really think it's going to be necessary to have a safe way to enter and exit route 46 at Howland Springs, plus the school buses go up and down that steep hill with the turns, etc. It's just going to get worse and

worse, right as traffic continues to increase. Is there any plan to do any of that and could there be and what would it take?

Trustee Rick Clark

I think it was probably more of a discussion, rather than a plan, previously about realigning Howland Springs with Kenyon. Personally, I think it's a little premature for that. The state hasn't really finalized the plan. I mean they've just finished taking up all the public input, which we forwarded to them. I have here a copy of your email that we forwarded on.

Bruce Gump

I thought about doing a second chapter on that, but I didn't.

Trustee Rick Clark

That's okay. And I don't know what the final version of this will be, but I believe the State's plan is to push that traffic down to Mines Road instead of coming down Springs. I believe that's the case.

Bruce Gump

To go down Stillwagon and then down Mines? Oh my goodness.

Trustee Rick Clark

Well there's going to be some inconvenience.

Bruce Gump

It's not just inconvenient, I mean, my goodness, think about safety vehicles trying to get out to the hospitals. They have to go all the way down onto Mines? That's almost two miles out of the way.

Trustee Rick Clark

You know that's not our plan I'm just telling you what I think it is. You know, as far as Howland Township, that would be us constructing that road, acquiring property and lining it with Kenyon. Financially, I don't know that's anything the Township could undertake to realign Howland Springs Road with Kenyon Drive.

Bruce Gump

You don't. You haven't looked into it, so you don't know.

Trustee Rick Clark

And that's correct. I have not looked into it.

Bruce Gump

That is the pit area which has nothing in it right now. I know the owner of that and I think he'd be very happy to see that developed because there's rocks in there right now. That could be developed into something else, if there was access and there's no access

Trustee Dr. James LaPolla

Well you have a left turn. Do you have a left row coming off of Howland Springs down in that new road to match up with Kenyon? Wherever they want to call that road. Is that the plan like a left and a right or is there something coming off of Howland Springs or what's the plan? You know I'm saying how would you know?

Trustee Rick Clark

There is no plan. I think the thought would be to turn left off of Springs and intersect with Kenyon.

Bruce Gump

Yeah, that's where Stonebridge and Dunkin Donuts are.

Trustee Rick Clark

I mean that's the thought. Stop off Springs at 46, turn left and then right and come down to the private traffic signal there at Kenyon where the flashing light is now. That's what Mr. Gump's talking about. Now I can't see how many people really, I'm not causing trouble here, how many people really attempt to turn left off of Howland Springs on 46 now anyway.

Bruce Gump

There are a fair number. In fact, it is difficult sometimes and I do know people that have to go well out of their way and then deal with all the mall traffic by going down Mines or whatever, to get down to 46. I mean occasionally I'm sure the Chief can verify occasionally there are accidents there. You know bad things can happen if traffic gets backed up.

When they close at 82, there's just going to be that many more. That'll have to go down there or like you said they'll have to go down to Mines which again would be a good distance out of the way. Trying to get to any of the hospitals would require several minutes more. Which as we know is not necessarily good when you're trying to get help.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

So, Mrs. St George, are there grants that the State makes available either through ODOT or through East Gate that addresses dangerous intersections and help non- state entities to repair or do things to fix them?

Administrator Darlene St. George

There are when their data to back up that it's a dangerous intersection. The problem there is that intersection at this point in time as we sit right now is not considered a dangerous intersection. So the State has safety money sometimes available to help out but at this point in time It doesn't

qualify for that safety money. It's not that we're not always looking at this, we are. Once all of these projects are completed, what's going to happen down there, we don't know. If they may bump up, there may be minor accidents. But the fender benders are still going to bump up that the numbers. If they bump up the numbers, the numbers may show that money will become available, but right now the State is saying that's a Howland Township road that's a Howland Township problem. The Township certainly does not have that. That fix is more than our total budget would be a year, so we don't have that kind of expendable dollars. We are always looking for grant dollars so you know it's on everyone's radar screen. Bruce, it's not that we're ignoring it. It's on everyone's radar screen. We've had conversations with ODOT and we've had conversations with Eastgate. But, as of this point in time there's no money. I've also had conversations with the property owner there about the possibility. But you're right, and the fact that the property owner would welcome it, if the funds are available. So, it's all about funding right now. So that's what we're looking at. We're always looking for funding, always applying for funding to see if we can come up with it. Funding is hard right now and the State has cut back on their transportation budget. And so, it's difficult to find funding. Trumbull County, Howland Township and the City of Warren, together, just applied for an EDA grant to do some major improvements over in the Golden Triangle, where that railroad tracks are at Larchmont. You know how terrible that is right there. Well, we applied for the grant altogether and we were just denied that grant. These funds are scarce and becoming harder every week to put our hands on, well it doesn't mean we're not going to keep trying. We will, but right now we don't see a funding source and that's the bottom line.

Bruce Gump

That's a significant issue. Question is going to be then what can the residents up in this area that will be so badly affected by all this do to help with that?

Trustee Rick Clark

Just keep lobbying the State. I mean. they've been very open to listening to us, listening to our two Chiefs and making some changes. And we still don't know what the final plan is going to be after all this public input.

Bruce Gump

When I spoke with the State, they were very clear that they have no intention of doing anything about Howland Springs Road because it's a township road.

Trustee Rick Clark

Yeah, that part's correct.

Bruce Gump

Now they did say that they would be very willing to place a traffic light there on 46.

Trustee Rick Clark

Okay, great.

Bruce Gump

I mean, as part of the effort to control traffic, you know, moving through the area. I also talked to him about putting the barriers up in front of sheets to keep people from turning left and that was not a good idea.

Administrator Darlene St. George

Quite frankly, if they move the light at the end of Kenyon that blinks, it is set up to be a full traffic light. When the property owner paid to have the wiring done he had that set for a full traffic light. I mean, if the State would put a traffic light at the end of Springs, I think that certainly will be a huge help.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

That's something Bruce.

Administrator Darlene St. George

I'm glad you shared that information with us.

Trustee Rick Clark

I had not heard that.

Bruce Gump

Well, this is just a phone conversation with the guy and the guy who's on the website is more involved with the environmental side of all this so I'm not sure he really has the authority to say.

Administrator Darlene St. George

It doesn't matter, I'm not going to hold anyone to it but I'm glad that you brought it up because when we're at the table and we're conversing about this, that's an easier conversation to have right now. Because of the funding cuts at ODOT an easier conversation will be about a traffic light rather than the rerouting. They have to tap into safety money and like I said, the road just doesn't qualify for the safety money, but the traffic light is, is a step forward.

Trustee Dr. James LaPolla

I want to say one thing Bruce to you and your wife because we hear her voice every so often. Quite honestly active people in the community like yourself and your wife, that have the time to due diligence on these projects, really means a lot because you're putting the time and energy into not just yourself but the safety and looking at the whole Township as a whole. Suddenly, just like we said tonight, we never thought about some of these things like this light, and some of these other deviations on Howland Wilson, Springs or Kenyon. Because you were able to spend the time and look at all these things and talk to people, I'm giving my hand out to you. I think that's really an outstanding amount of work that you, your wife and your team are doing bringing some of those projects to possibly fruition at least to our table. We can look into them so again I want to give you credit for spending the time and looking at a non-selfish attitude towards improving the safety of

Howland Township itself, the residents, and those coming through the intersection. I want to say thank you for that.

Bruce Gump

I can tell you that in all the conversations that I've had in the neighborhood, everybody is very concerned about what's going to happen on Springs and when Howland Wilson is closed off in 2025. At least that was the proposal. I know it's not in stone yet, so there's a couple of years to make this happen. But we all know how this goes. It's never fast, so if we aren't very proactive right now, it's going to be too late. I don't want to get to a point where a school bus gets into an accident at the bottom of the hill because we weren't quick enough to make the changes that really should be made. I can make other contacts with other people. In the end, you know there are sources right for economic development, that this would significantly improve because it would make that area back behind the restaurants more accessible and therefore, open for development.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

If you and your neighbors want to talk to our State Legislators, you can speak to them when they're doing this State budget to make sure that they take serious looks at the safety funding sources that Mr. St George was talking about. When they're cutting those things, these are the types of projects that they're cutting that have an impact on people's lives on a daily basis. I know budgeting is not an easy thing but this is a real-world consequence of some of the budgeting decisions that are being made down in Columbus, so as you do your advocacy, those are the little-known funds that do make a difference in people's lives.

Bruce Gump

The problem with that is the first question anybody asked is, well, how much would it cost? I have no idea.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

I mean, they're cutting those budgets. They're cutting that funding. I know you can't be advocating for a specific project when they're cutting that whole line item in the budget that makes a difference on all types of projects that have safety impacts.

Bruce Gump

What's the process? Who would do the study right to figure out what it would take to make this happen? I know this study costs money too.

Administrator Darlene St. George

Because it's a township responsibility, we would work in tandem with the County Engineer's office. There may be a number Bruce, and I was sitting here thinking about this because this isn't a new conversation. Even before the diverging diamond, we've had extensive discussions about Howland Springs. Back when they were doing the comprehensive plan, we had discussions about Howland Springs and bringing it out to match Kenyon Drive. It has been a long discussion because it seems like it should be, even without the diverging diamond, even without the closing off of

Howland Wilson. It was something that for a long time we've been thinking about and trying to figure out where, and if that were to happen, where are we going to get the funding? So that's always our question. There may be a figure on how much it would cost to do that. I just need to go back in history, a little bit back in the archives and look that up. I can't give it to you tonight, and I don't even want to. I have a number in my head, but I'm not going to trust it. I'm just going to say let me go back in the archives and look it up, but I believe that a number already exists.

Bruce Gump

Of course, it has changed in the meantime. It would be outdated.

Administrator Darlene St. George

Well, it's going to be outdated. What we'll know from that number is that it's good to know and it will be more than that. If we have the number and we have the information, I can ask the County Engineer to figure out what it would be. We'll work on that. We'll work on getting a number.

Bruce Gump

That would be helpful. I would appreciate that there would be an effort made to make sure that the plan discussed back then doesn't need to be changed or updated. There're no environmental issues or something like that.

Administrator Darlene St. George

Well we didn't get into all of that, I'll be honest. There were no environmentals done because that's a whole other level of expense. The other thing is, at the time we were talking about rerouting Howland Wilson Road, stopping it off then moving it over to Kenyon, we hadn't had any discussion with the property owner. Since that time, I've had several discussions with the property owner about it. We haven't done any environmental, and that's a whole other animal that would come into play. We can get a ballpark figure as to what an environmental cost would be.

Bruce Gump

It's a good start and I'm happy to work with you in any way I can to help.

Administrator Darlene St. George

I appreciate that.

Bruce Gump

Let's go ahead and get started if it's something to make it happen. I'd like to help with that.

Administrator Darlene St. George

Okay. All right, let me do some digging.

Trustee Rick Clark

I would like to hear if the two safety experts, the two Chiefs have any comment on this. Do they have anything to add to this conversation?

Police Chief Nick Roberts

I come down Howland Springs every day, except for in the wintertime when the roads are bad because you'll slide right out into that intersection on the 46. But there have been times when I've sat there in traffic for anywhere between four and seven minutes because someone's making a left-hand turn in front of me. It's hard to make a right-hand turn when someone's making a left-hand turn. There're definitely some issues at that intersection that I think need to be addressed. Even if it is a traffic light that would be a huge deal because we have a lot of people making left-hand turns there. Often, they make left-hand turns into the middle turn lane, and they're driving that turn lane until they can merge right into traffic, and that's hazardous as well. I mean we're open for any suggestions. Like I said, I travel that road every day so I appreciate your input Bruce,

Fire Chief James Pantalone

Mr. Gump, you talked about a suggestion in your conversation about for safety vehicles extending exit or entrance ramps?

Bruce Gump

Right, extending the entrance ramp from Route 46 to eastbound 82 to connect with the exit ramp on Howland Wilson Road. If any safety vehicle or any other vehicle for that matter wanted turn right on to Howland Wilson, which was included in the State's preferred proposal. It would prevent them from having to merge on to 82 and then merge back off again onto the exit ramp. It's not a long way. Me looking at it, I'm no traffic engineer or road engineer. My expertise is electrical engineering and not civil engineering. Alright so, it looks like it's a possible thing to do. I can tell you that the fella we talked to at the State was very interested in that idea.

Fire Chief James Pantalone

That would be in conjunction with the diversion diamond process you're speaking of?

Bruce Gump

Well, I think it would be done as part of the closing of Howland Wilson Road, but it certainly could be done as part of the diverging diamond. Isn't that scheduled for 2023?

Fire Chief James Pantalone

If you look at the diverging diamond process how it impacts that traffic flow movement as well that is one of the items. Chief Roberts, remember we did talk about that? They wanted to go full closure, and we brought up that's impossible. You can't do full closure; we need to be able to get into that quadrant quickly, which is basically running us through the diverging diamond and leaving straight up there and turning right on Howland Wilson there. I think that might have been part of some of the diverging diamond process, they might be working in tandem with that but I just want to double back to make sure I understood you correctly. I think it is unfortunate this past weekend with the fatality over there. This was clearly a cross-traffic issue, and yes, Mr. Gump, it may have nudged this closer to that point. But I also know, Mr. Clark and Mrs. St George also said, although nothing factual has been put on the table, I do recall having some talk about the Howland Springs hill being a problem. Throwing it on their table as far as you know the alternative

for either emergency vehicles, because like chief Roberts said, coming down to turn left out of there but in the cold temperatures going up and coming down there you can't run a school bus up there and you can't run a fire truck up there. We make the loop all the way around so I love your idea about a traffic light concept down there to kind of maybe slow things down a little bit. The right ends the closure of Howland Wilson, certainly is going to save lives and at least we're getting the right entry into each of those areas to make sure that our responses. But going to the hospital, I'm not to concerned. Although I understand we have some alternatives, we've asked for emergency crossovers in specific areas on 82 for us, specifically in conjunction when the right ends. So we've accommodated some of the alternative items as far as getting to the hospital and having some outs on that.

Bruce Gump

One of the advantages of relocating Highland Springs Road to intersect where Kenyon comes in is that the angle to climb the hill would be over a longer area, a longer distance, so it'd be less steep. It would make it easier and safer when the roads are bad. I, too, have come down that hill, and fortunately for me, some of your officers have been smart enough to block off the road because it wasn't treated yet. Quite honestly, I was very grateful for that because that would not be fun. I know people who intentionally go down that hill with their right tires off the road in case they lose traction.

Trustee Rick Clark

Alright, very good. Thank you. Anyone else care to go ahead?

Administrator Darlene St. George

It's funny we're having this conversation tonight. Rick was in my office today and we were talking about left-hand turns. I've lived in Howland my whole life, and I can tell you that I plan all my travels making right-hand turns because it's almost impossible anywhere in Howland to make a left-hand turn unless it's with the light. I don't pull out and go left in front of cars because it's dangerous. Everywhere in Howland. I told Rick today that by our office, I don't turn left because you just can't do it.

Bruce Gump

I understand that FedEx and UPS do the same thing. They lay out their route so that the drivers are making right-hand turns only.

Administrator Darlene St. George

Right, I do, too. If I'm with the light, I'm okay. But to turn left in front of people in Howland, no. People don't pay attention. Everyone's in a hurry and I just don't do it.

Trustee Rick Clark

Thank you. Anyone else care to address any of us or the department heads. If not, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Matthew Vansuch and seconded by Dr. James LaPolla to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 P.M.

Roll Call:	Matthew Vansuch	-yea
	Dr. James J LaPolla	-yea
	Rick Clark	-yea

Meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

Approved by:  Dated: 4/6/21
Robert M. Costello, Fiscal Officer

Approved by:  Dated: 4/6/21
Rick Clark, Chairperson-Trustee