

**HIGHWAY ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 19, 2017**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Vierzba, Ed Dills, Cheryl Everitt, Ed Houle, Larry Tobias, Brian Wess, Mike James, Brian Galpin, Jean Meinzer

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jim Mesite, Joseph Rosario

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Stan VanderWerf (EPC Commissioner), Jim Reid (EPC DPW), Jennifer Irvine (EPC DPW), Troy Wiitala (EPC DPW), Anthony Ramage (EPC DPW), Ellen Heaverlo (EPC DPW), Robert Evans (EPC DPW), Joel Quevillon (EPC PIO), Richard 'Reb' Williams (Citizen)

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

- Chair Vierzba called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM and read the Highway Advisory Commission's purpose and responsibilities as written in the bylaws.

**2. MOTION (Ms. Everitt/Mr. Tobias) to excuse the absence of Mr. Mesite. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Mr. Rosario's absence was not excused.**

**3. MEETING MINUTES**

- **MOTION (Ms. Everitt/Mr. Tobias) to approve minutes of the March 15, 2017 meeting. MOTION TO APPROVE CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**4. COMMISSIONER/CITIZEN COMMENTS**

- Commissioner VanderWerf informed the HAC that the Board of County Commissioners did a Proclamation in support of the widening of I-25 and in non-support of House Bill 17-1242 that seeks approval for the state to temporarily impose additional state sales and use taxes for 20 years beginning January 1, 2018, and to issue up to a specified amount of transportation revenue anticipation notes (TRANS) for the purpose of funding specified state transportation projects. The reason for the decision to not support this bill is that the BoCC feels that the real issue in Colorado is not lack of revenue but prioritization.
- Mr. Vierzba stated that the HAC will draft a document in support of the BoCC's position.
- Ms. Meinzer addressed Commissioner VanderWerf in regards to the increase of Marijuana grow houses in the county. A total 41 grow houses have been identified in the

Hanover Fire District alone. Can these growers be taxed for road maintenance due to the huge impact they have? Commissioner VanderWerf acknowledged her concerns, and assured her that the BoCC in the process of evaluating what actions can be taken to mitigate these issues but are consistent with Colorado law. He suggested that the HAC submit a series of questions to BoCC via Mr. Reid.

- Ms. Everitt had questions regarding the changes to the bylaws.

## 5. STAFF REPORTS

### A. ADMINISTRATION

Jim Reid (Executive Director, Department of Public Works)

- Mr. Reid briefed the HAC on his and Ms. Irvine's attendance of the 2017 National Association of County Engineers (NACE). They brought back a wealth of information that may help with implementing innovative ways of road maintenance. Looking at machinery that would make it easier and faster to maintain gravel roads. This piece of equipment would cost approximately \$650K. A cost/benefit analysis will be done. A discussion about 'gravel' versus 'dirt' roads commenced.
- There has been an increase in hostile encounters with citizens by the road crews. Citizens have been verbally abusive, in some cases trying to block the crews from doing their job. Mr. Reid had a discussion with Law Enforcement about these issues and hopes that in the future charges can be filed against these citizens. Mr. Tobias suggested the use of dashcams for the equipment. Mr. Reid stated that the cost/benefit has to be evaluated.
- Dust and washboard complaints are on the uptick. Unless we get significant moisture, there is little that can be done about it.
- There has been a lot of population growth in the county. Houses are being purchased at a very fast rate. People are moving from urban areas to rural parts of the county and expect the same level of road maintenance as in the city, and therefore complaints are increasing. Ms. Everitt asked if a bond increase for developers is being looked at. Mr. Reid advised her that it is being considered, and the goal is to increase the bonds as the cost of living increases.
- An Administrative Technician for the Engineering Division has been hired, and will be taking over the duties of Board Liaison from Ms. Heaverlo. She will be trained over the next few months.
- The town hall meeting in Ellicott that took place on March 18<sup>th</sup> was briefed. Many road maintenance complaints were voiced, as well as concerns over Marijuana grow operations.

### B. ENGINEERING DIVISION

Jennifer Irvine (County Engineer, Department of Public Works)

- Ms. Irvine reiterated how valuable attending the NACE Conference was, and briefed the Commission on another association, the Colorado Association of Road Supervisors and Engineers (CARSE) where she is a member and currently also serves as vice president. More information can be found on their website [www.carse.org](http://www.carse.org).

- The Marksheffel Rd (South) Project is anticipated to be completed by the end of May. There will be a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and invitations will go out soon. The project completion is well ahead of schedule which was in the fall of 2017.
- A contract has been awarded last month to Jalisco Construction for the Oilwell Bridge replacement project. Work will begin on Monday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. Press releases and going out and signs are in place. There will be detours. This project should be completed in October 2017.
- The Holtwood Bridge replacement project has been awarded to SEMA Construction. The work will also begin next Monday and will last approximately 6 months. Due to the bridge bordering Elbert County, coordination had been done with them regarding road closures and detours.
- The 2017 Maintenance Contracts for asphalt, concrete and chip seal work have been finalized and the work should begin soon.
- The Paonia channel (Galley Rd east of Powers Blvd) is being rebuilt due to it suffering a catastrophic failure. The cost is estimated at \$72K.
- An update on the Tanager Way project located in the Stratmoor Valley area was provided. This project is funded by Emergency Watershed funding with a match from the local Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). These repairs are necessary to save an existing bridge due to damage that flooding has caused. The design built was done in-house and therefore saved the county a significant amount of money.
- The next I-25 PEL public meetings are scheduled for next week. There will be a meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup> in Douglas County, and another on April 27<sup>th</sup> in El Paso County. Mr. Vierzba expressed his concerns regarding the lack of funding sources for this project. A discussion commenced.
- Mr. Dills asked Ms. Irvine about the timeline on the Hwy 24/Garrett Rd construction. Ms. Irvine will send out a summary to all.
- Ms. Irvine introduced Mr. Anthony ‘Anton’ Ramage, the new Deputy County Engineer to the Commission and briefed them on all new positions and staffing within the Engineering Division.
- Mr. Tobias had questions on the Marksheffel Rd project costs as it pertains to staying under budget as well as questions regarding the design.

### C. HIGHWAY DIVISION

Troy Wiitala (Highway Division Manager, Department of Public Works)

- The graveling program is well on its way. Crews just completed work on Powers Rd and are prepping Yoder Rd and County Line Rd. Graveling on County Line Rd should begin today. The order of the roads on the list deviates from the schedule as work has to be adjusted to the weather condition in the different parts of the County.
- So far there have been 4 snow events in 2017. The latest one on April 4<sup>th</sup> brought heavy, wet snow. Some mailboxes were damaged when they were hit by the heavy snow that came off the snow plow blades. Ms. Everitt asked Mr. Wiitala what the procedure is for destroyed/damaged mailboxes. Mr. Wiitala advised that any claims need to go to El Paso County Risk Management. They will enter a claim for a replacement mailbox.
- Mr. Wiitala briefed the Commission on the Living Snow Fence Project.
- The dust abatement schedule has been finalized and work will begin on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Customer service request for crack sealing are being worked.

- Working on cleaning out debris and the channel for the Tanager Ditch project in preparation of placing the blocks to build the retaining wall. It will take approximately 700 blocks to complete the wall.
- Thanks to the Fleet Division the road striping equipment is up and running and the paint has been received. Striping should begin soon.
- Erosion control is being done on a lot of the Highway equipment. New equipment/trucks have been ordered.
- An update on Highway staffing was given.

## **6. Discussion Related to HAC Outreach/Change of Venue**

- A discussion led by Chair Vierzba took place suggesting a possible change of venue for the upcoming HAC meetings to establish a better dialog with the citizens they represent. A proposal was made to move the monthly HAC meetings to various locations in the County for the first two months of each quarter; the third meeting of each quarter would be held at the Regional Building Hearing Room. It was also suggested to change the time of the meetings to allow citizens to attend after work. Pros and cons of the proposed changes were discussed, such as Department of Public Works staff time and logistical challenges with the live streaming and recording of the meetings.
- Mr. Dills suggested making better use of the HAC website to keep citizens informed.
- Mr. Quevillon suggested working with the Citizens Outreach Group to combine outreach to citizens. This would combine topics and draw a larger amount of people.
- Mr. Williams pointed out that most citizens will bypass groups like the HAC and address their concerns directly with the specific entity, such as the Department of Public Works or the Board of County Commissioners.
- Ms. Meinzer commented that the citizens in her district expect her to represent their interest at the HAC, and also expect to be briefed by her. That is the reason that they do not attend the meetings.
- Chair Vierzba asked the members to compile their thoughts and suggestion, and email them to him so that this discussion can be continued at the next meeting in May.

## **7. Discussion Regarding Draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program**

- Chair Vierzba had asked the members to read the draft of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program so that everyone understands the process.
- Ms. Irvine answered several questions regarding the purpose of the program.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

This meeting was adjourned at 11:09 AM.

*Copies of the presentations are attached to the minutes*

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Heaverlo  
Office Manager/Board Liaison – Department of Public Works

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