

STARKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' SPECIAL MEETING

7-18-25

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Commissioners and meet in special session in the meeting room of the Starke County Annex #1, Knox, IN with Charles Chesak absent and the following proceedings were held to wit:

IN RE: TOTO ROAD OIL BLEEDING

Central Paving appeared before the commissioners regarding the bleeding on Toto Road. There is a 2 ½ mile stretch east of Highway 35 that has severe bleeding and the commissioners and highway department have been receiving numerous complaints from the public about oil getting on their vehicles.

Scott with Central Paving stated that the extreme heat we have been having contributed to it.

Mike VanDeMark asked if the project was bid why didn't they scope the project. Mike was told that they did and that it probably could've used a little more prep work.

They stated that the former superintendent specified what he wanted and they thought it was ok. It was further stated that this was the first hot weather this road has seen and he has seen roads a lot worse.

Rachel Oesterreich said she has never seen a whole segment of a road bleed like this. She feels it may have been done too late in the year. She knew Scott had been out there and she said it was raining when the work started, but otherwise she loves their work.

Scott said he has been with Central Paving for 15 years and been in this line of work for 30 plus years. They have done more than 80 miles of chip seal in Starke County and he feels it will cure out and be just fine.

Don Binkley said he personally feels something is wrong with the road.

Scott stated that a lot of it is bleeding that is tracked down the road and that most of the bleeding is in the middle of the road where most of the traffic uses. He further stated that nothing else is bad and just that part of the road with ground conditions being wet.

Mike VanDeMark feels that something is wrong and that he saw rock peeling up.

Rachel Oesterreich said she has been out there several times and put sand down.

Don and Mike both are looking for a solution as to what they can offer to fix this situation.

Scott said to give it time and the road is not falling apart. He said the moisture in the ground is pushing the oil to the surface and it will be fine when it cures out.

Kurt says he has seen this happen and it always stops. They would like to play the waiting game.

Mike VanDeMark said that this is not acceptable as taxpayers keep calling about oil being on their cars. He doesn't feel the "waiting game" is going to sit well with the taxpayers.

Kurt stated again that it is the moisture pushing the oil to the surface.

Mike stated that the cross road is just fine and that when he was driving over the road 3 or 4 weeks ago the rocks were peeling up.

Kurt feels the temperature and the moisture is the cause.

Scott said you can call any county around here and you're going to see bleeding, even on the roads that they didn't do.

Ben said it doesn't take a lot of ground moisture to push up oil. He wants to be fair and he will work with Rachel to address the work. He feels you need to fix a ditch to drain the excess water and that the area of the road is low.

Don Binkley asked why wasn't this noted at the time.

Ben said the community crossings engineer helped come up with the specs for this and then Central Paving came out and did what they asked.

Rachel agrees and said that the consulting firm should have caught this and they don't use that consulting firm any more.

Scott said that INDOT has ranges on chip and seal and they go out with their experience and adjust due to the conditions of the road. He said that weather at the time also contributes.

Rachel would like to see, as a minimum, putting down crushed limestone over the whole segment, but would like them to pay for the aggregate. She thinks it might need to be done twice.

Scott said 12s would be the best. He feels a salt spreader would work with the crushed limestone.

Public comment was that the conditions weren't good when the road was done.

Mike said that maybe the damp conditions affected it.

Kurt said you would have seen a problem the next day if the wet conditions caused this problem.

Mike asked if a non-biased consultant could come out and Rachel said that would cost about \$10,000.

Mike worried about more stone causing more problems.

Scott said to throw some chips on it and roll it out. Maybe doing it twice.

Rachel said her concern is they don't have the aggregate and doesn't feel the taxpayers should have to pay.

Mike would like someone to come out and come up with the best solution.

Ben has a research crew he can send out. He stated that this is not anyone's fault, it just happens. It is not irregular for this to happen and there are a lot of variables.

Rachel said Heritage Research group does a great job and maybe her new consultant would come out and check it as well. She stated that she would have to figure out how much tonnage was needed and that they don't have the #12s.

Scott feels the sand spreader would work for this project.

Rachel said she would need to get the roller ready and needs help to pay for the aggregate.

Kurt feels Central Paving would be willing to throw this into the pot. He would be willing to supply the chips but could the Highway come and pick it up.

Rachel said that the Highway department would pick it up.

Kurt wants everyone to be satisfied at the end of this meeting. He feels pug would be better than chip seal in the future as he feels this isn't a chip seal road.

Ben feels dealing with community crossings involvement, that there are variations.

Don and Mike aren't blaming them, they just want a solution.

Mike asked Rachel to bring a consultant in to check. Rachel said it could be as early as next week.

Scott said he would be willing to come up while the work is being done and feels that 2 tandems will probably do the job.

Rachel said she has 2 new internationals coming and that they both have sand spreaders.

Mike asked if the road should be broomed first and Scott said it is probably not needed.

IN RE: BOA SHORES ROAD PROJECT

Public comment on the Boa Shores project and when Phase II would begin.

Rachel said that a lot of frost kept them from being able to do that this year and is hoping to do this in June of 2026. The commissioners go through the paving plan in January. It is only about a mile, so it should not be a problem to be done next year.

There being no other business to come before the board Don Binkley moved to adjourn, seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 2 ayes.

Absent
Charles Chesak, President

Mike VanDeMark, Vice President

Don Binkley, Member

Michaelene J. Houston, Auditor and
Secretary to the County Commissioners