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Officials say town gravel road is best choice, but village should annex it

Paving Silver Beach Road, which leads to Belgium's industrial park but lies in the Town of Belgium, has been a contentious issue since the industrial park was developed by Ansay Associates in 1995.

Village President Richard Howells resurrected the idea of the two communities working together to develop the 1.1 miles of gravel road during a March 26 joint meeting of the two boards that he requested.

With renovation of Main Street expected in 2013 or 2014, Howells said, it's important to have as little truck traffic as possible on the new street.

Several owners of businesses in the industrial park attended the meeting. The gravel road is closed for the winter at Highway LL except for farmers to access their fields.

"If you don't do it before the road re-opens, there's going to be an accident," Michael Watry, owner of Trimen Industries, said.

"Truck drivers want to use it. They use it now even though they're not supposed to."

More trucks will use it in summer, and kids bike on the road, said Watry, who is building a large addition to his business.

The hills in the road make it impossible to see approaching vehicles and that portion of the road is not wide enough for two-way traffic, he said.

Nate Kohn, who is adding an office to his business, Nate's Landscaping, said he and his employees use the road in the summer.

Town officials said improving the road is a good idea, but they don't want to use taxpayers' money to develop a road that will be used primarily for industrial park traffic and not town residents.

Town Chairman Francis Kleckner saw some benefits.

"We would get less truck traffic going over some of our other town roads going to the village's industrial park," he said.

Town Supr. Bill Janeshek said the two communities worked on the road issue in 1998 and almost had an agreement.

"Back then, we as a board felt if the village is putting an industrial park out there instead of along Highway LL, they should annex the property and run the road out there," Janeshek said.

“At one time, there was a proposal for a golf course on a lot of the remaining land. The village was growing so fast, we thought the land would be annexed, but then everything stopped.

“In my opinion, it’s not in our best interest to spend a half million to a million dollars to reconstruct roads that benefit the industrial park.”

Village Trustee Vickie Boehlein said she doesn’t see much benefit to the town, either, but finding money for the village to do it would be difficult.

If the road is developed as a joint project, Howells said there is the possibility it would be more attractive for grant money.

Maintenance of the road was also an issue if it is paved. The town doesn’t want the added cost, but the village has no jurisdiction over the road.

“What is the town’s goal?” asked Village Trustee John Hise. “Do you want us to annex the land or do you want to do one side and we’ll do the other side?”

Town Chairman Tom Winker noted the village can annex only the road right of way, and that may be the best option to provide the shortest and safest route to the industrial park.

Janeshek, who works for the Ozaukee County Highway Department, said it costs $250,000 per mile to pave a road, but this is not a simple paving job.

The entire road bed likely has to be rebuilt to handle semi-tractor trailers and a portion of the road — from Highway LL west to Alder Road — is too narrow for two-way traffic, he said.

That means land must be acquired, which will increase the cost, Janeshek said.

When the industrial park was developed, Silver Beach Road from Highway KW to east of the wastewater treatment facility was annexed to the village and paved.

“We’re not going to make any decisions tonight,” Howells said. “We just wanted to know how everyone feels. If 51% said don’t do it, we would drop it, but it appears we all want the road. We will be discussing this more.”