

Nighttime farm work draws fire

Written by Carol Pomeday
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Candidate says manure spreaders are too noisy, damage village streets

When trucks pulling manure spreaders traveled late Friday, Dec. 4, on Belgium village streets, a candidate for trustee complained to the village marshal and attempted to stop the trucks.

On Monday, Jeff Thiel, who is seeking to be elected in April, asked the Village Board to restrict the hours such trucks can travel in the village and enforce weight restrictions.

Thiel stopped the drivers of several trucks that were hauling liquid manure from the Keith "Skip" Schueller farm to one of his farm fields that is surrounded by residential development.

Dan Risch, owner of DR Ag Services which was hauling the manure for Schueller, said there was a narrow window that the manure could be applied to the field.

"We needed to finish the field. Skip (Schueller) needed to get the manure out and the weather hadn't been cooperating," Risch said.

"We had to wait for the ground to freeze so we wouldn't get mud on village streets. If we waited too long, the field would be too frozen to work up.

"It wasn't frozen during the day. We started at 4 p.m. and would have finished by 11 p.m. if he (Thiel) hadn't stopped our trucks. We finished at 11:45 p.m."

Risch said four trucks moved about 40 loads from the farm on Highway D west of the village to the field, where the liquid manure was injected into the ground.

"It was a Friday night, and our trucks aren't that loud," Risch said. "This is a farming community. If you drive out of the village, you're going to run into a farm."

The trucks have large floatation tires that don't tear up the roads the way regular truck tires would, he said.

His manure spreaders are well lit, Risch said.

"We have LED flashing lights that can be seen three miles away," he said.

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Deputy Marshal Brian Schrap talked with Risch and allowed him to finish the job.

Marshal Scott Brinkman said Tuesday Thiel should not have gone into the street to stop the trucks.

The village wants to work with Schueller, Brinkman said, but it will enforce the village's 9 p.m. noise ordinance.

Construction equipment must stop operations in the village by 7 p.m., he said, but non-construction equipment, such as lawn mowers and wood chippers, can be operated until 9 p.m.

"I would consider this non-construction," Brinkman said.

"The fields were there long before the houses were there, and that's the best access to their fields."