

Pedestrians face snowy challenge on new Hwy. 33 sidewalk in city

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Wednesday, 27 February 2013 19:43

Pedestrians who try to walk on the new sidewalk along Highway 33 on Port Washington's west side have a difficult journey this winter.

A segment of the sidewalk just east of Sweetwater Boulevard has gone unshoveled for much of the winter, forcing pedestrians to slog through the snow or walk on the roadway.

The sidewalk to the east, including some in the Town of Port Washington, has been consistently cleared. The bike path, which crosses from the south side of the road to the north side at Sweetwater, is also cleared.

City ordinances require sidewalks to be shoveled within 24 hours after a snowfall. If not done, the city will send out a letter notifying the property owner they must shovel, City Administrator Mark Grams said. If the work still isn't done, the city will clear the walkway and bill the property owner.

Enforcement is done on a complaint basis, and no one has complained to the city about the Highway 33 sidewalk, Grams said.

"This is the first I've heard of it," he said, adding he would look into the situation. "We don't have the sidewalk police out."

The sidewalk abuts land owned by We Energies and Bielinski Homes, Grams said.

When Highway 33 was rebuilt last year, it was touted as a project that would not only move traffic efficiently but would also provide a safe route for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel between the communities in the form of a sidewalk and bike path.

While that promise of safe passage for walkers and bikers may be true in spring, summer and fall, winter has provided a true challenge as a debate has continued over who is responsible for shoveling the walkways between the City of Port and Village of Saukville.

According to an opinion by Town of Port Washington Attorney Steve Cain, based on information from the Department of Transportation, the city and village, not the township, is responsible for clearing the walkways — including those in the town.

The City of Port Washington is responsible for maintaining them east of Jackson Road, and the Village of Saukville is responsible for the walkways west of Jackson Road, according to the opinion.

