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Wednesday, 16 June 2010 18:28

Port's decision to relocate stormwater facility near Hwy. LL not likely to delay long-awaited project

With little discussion Tuesday, Port Washington aldermen agreed to move a planned stormwater detention pond that will be built as part of the long-awaited Highway 33 reconstruction.

Fears that the change in plans for the highway would delay the project may not come to fruition, Public Works Director Rob Vanden Noven said.

"I've talked to the designer, who is determined to let nothing stop the schedule," Vanden Noven said, adding he was meeting with officials on Wednesday to discuss the project and its schedule. "It's certainly possible to keep it on schedule, and we intend to do so."

The reason, he said, is that the city made a quick decision in the matter.

City officials took a second look at the detention pond planned for the former Kolbach farm at the southwest corner of highways LL and 33 after learning it would not alleviate flooding in the area, especially near Second Avenue.

A study done by the engineering firm Bonestroo and reviewed by aldermen Tuesday revealed showed the planned pond would not handle the water from a two-year storm.

That is the biggest reason the city should move the pond to an area south of the Aurora medical Clinic on the southeast corner of the interchange, Ald. Tom Hudson said.

Building a 19-acre regional stormwater detention pond there, and doing some minor grading, would mean the facility could handle even a 100-year storm, according to the study.

"If we can fix it, let's do so," Hudson said, noting flooding problems have plagued area residents for years.

Matthew Bednarski, an engineer with Bonestroo, said that moving the pond will also help the city meet Department of Natural Resources water quality standards in 2013.

It would also allow the city to abandon the current dry stormwater pond in the Bley Park subdivision, Bednarski said, creating as many as two residential lots that could be sold.

The cost of the new pond was estimated at $535,000, Bednarski said. As much as $135,000 of that could be covered by a state grant, he said.

In addition, because it would create a regional stormwater pond, the city could assess future developers for part of the cost, Bednarski said.

He recommended the city negotiate with the Department of Transportation to ensure funds planned for the current pond would be transferred to the new facility.

The former Kolbach farm would lie fallow under the new plan, Vanden Noven told the council, noting that the state has restricted access to the property.

“It can’t be developed for anything,” he said.

The plan will, however, allow the city to keep a stand of woods that separates the Bley Park subdivision from Highway 33, something that’s important to residents there, Vanden Noven said.

The Highway 33 project, which runs from Tower Drive in Port Washington to just east of Highway W in Saukville, involves replacing the existing two-lane road with a four-lane divided highway, complete with turn lanes, curb and gutter, sidewalks, bike lanes, landscaping and lighting.

Three roundabouts are planned for the road. Two of them will be in Saukville, at Northwoods Road and Market Street. The third will be at the Highway LL interchange in Port.

Plans call for utility work to begin this fall and road construction next spring.