

Village takes on Hwy. 33 agreements

Written by Mark Jaeger

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Officials say change will give them greater authority to monitor spending on \$20 million road project

Throughout the planning for the reconstruction of Highway 33, the Village of Saukville has worked in lockstep with the City of Port Washington, which has been the lead agency on the project.

With the state Department of Transportation planning to approve contracts for the work next month, the Village Board approved a subtle change in the game plan Tuesday.

Trustees unanimously approved a pair of construction agreements, in essence giving the village greater oversight on the western section of the reconstruction.

The village agreements cover the stretch of highway from Jackson Road to the Milwaukee River overflow bridge near the Port Washington State Bank branch office. Port adopted a similar agreement Tuesday for the eastern portion of the project.

Previously approved memorandums of understanding between the village and the state limiting village liabilities remain in place.

Overall, the stretch of road work within the village — which includes the construction of roundabouts at Market Street and Northwoods Road — is expected to cost just over \$20 million.

State and federal funding will cover more than \$17 million of the total.

Based on current estimates, the village's share of that cost is expected to be \$2.7 million. That amount is about \$90,000 higher than projected in 2009.

“Once the bids come in, we will have a much better idea of what this is actually going to cost us and how much we will have to borrow,” Village Administrator Dawn Wagner told trustees.

“Because of all the cost sharing involved in this, we are going to have to watch spending closely throughout the project.”

As trustees reviewed the formal agreements for the work, Wagner said it was the last opportunity officials would have to modify the project.

Specifically, attention was turned to the decision to include decorative lighting wherever allowed along the highway corridor and relocate utility lines underground.

The DOT installs standard street lighting along roads it constructs, as well as at all critical intersections.

Village officials previously called for the use of decorative fixtures from Northwoods Road to

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Green Bay Road. The option will add about \$61,000 to the cost of the project.

“The door is open to eliminate decorative lighting. You haven’t signed anything yet,” Wagner said.

Burying utility lines is expected to be a much more expensive option, although not as costly as once projected.

Director of Public Works Roy Wilhelm said the relocation of utility lines is expected to cost \$360,000, markedly lower than initial estimates of \$900,000.

Although officials were told they could eliminate the utility work, Wagner said such a decision “would be a complete divergence from what you said you wanted to do.”

Ultimately, there was no interest by the board in eliminating either of the aesthetic components of the agreements.

The state also included an additional \$420,000 in Community Sensitive Solutions money, which will be used to pay for various village-directed landscaping measures.

“In essence, there should be no cost to the village of landscaping,” Wilhelm said.