



BLACKDUCK CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

THURSDAY JULY 30TH, 2015 6PM

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: The City Council of the City of Blackduck met in a scheduled work session at the Municipal Golf Course at 6:00 p.m. on July 30th, 2015.

Roll Call

Councilors present: Councilors Christenson, Stade

Councilors Absent: Mayor Lundberg, Councilor Loeken and Patch

Staff Present: City Administrator, Christina Regas

Others Present: Representative 2A Dave Hancock, Snowmobile Club President Phil Underdahl, local residents Alicia Underdahl and Jan Geerdes, DNR representatives David Schotzko, Greg Nelson, and Kent Skaar, and DOT representative Craig Collison

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm the Pledge of Allegiance was not recited.

Topics covered in the work session were as follows:

Trestle Update – The main reason for the meeting is to summarize the MN DNR bridge inspection report that was completed on the recently burned Blackduck Trestle Bridge. The report details the deterioration of the Trestle as a whole. Below are statements from the report:

Inspection Information:

The Channel of the Trestle has a rating of “good”. The report states that the channel is stable. There is debris from the burned bridge and old piling that has been cut off below the water surface.

The Deck of the Trestle has a rating of ‘failed’ the bridge deck has evenly spaced transverse RR ties with longitudinal deck planks on top. Bridge deck is completely burned for approximately 240 feet on the NE side. The remaining (unburned) RR ties are in varying degrees of decay.

The Substructure of the Trestle has a rating of ‘failed’ the substructure consists of 5-14” to 24” timber piles with double 8” x 14” x 14’-0” long timber pile caps. There is also lateral and longitudinal cross bracing for the entire length. Timber substructure has severe fire damage for approximately 240 ft. on the NE side (approximately 17 pile bents). 57% of the piling is in condition state 4 and 99% are in condition state 3 or worse. See attachments at the end of the report for quantities and descriptions of condition states. Pile caps have minor weathering and/or decay. The remaining (unburned) bracing members are significantly decayed.

The Superstructure of the Trestle has a rating of “serious”. The timber stringers have severe fire damage for approximately 240 ft. on the NE side. The non-burned timber stringers are in good shape exhibiting only minor weathering and minimal or not decay.

Work Required:

Substructure Rehabilitation: The entire substructure including both burned and not burned pile bents and bracing must be replaced. Recommend to frame out all pile bents using square timber members. Estimated Cost: \$1,025,000.00 rated as a high priority to be completed within 2 years.

Substructure Repair: DNR recommends replacing 240 lineal feet of burned timber beams (2-3 ply 10”x18” beams) 1,440 lineal feet total. Estimated cost: \$144,000.00 rated as a high priority to be completed within 2 years.

Replace Deck/Railings: Recommends replacing entire deck and railing system with transversely laminated timber deck with a timber plank wear coarse and timber rail system. All of which will



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meet current design standards. Estimated cost: \$650,000.00 rated as a high priority to be completed within 2 years.

Total Cost: \$1,819,000.00

Additional Notes: Emergency bridge inspection was performed due to severe fire damage from suspected arson activity. Approximately 240 ft. of the NE end has been burned. The local fire department was able to put out the fire before it spread further down the bridge. Regardless of the damage, the timber substructure was already experiencing severe decay. The bridge's primary use was pedestrian and snowmobile. We recommend that this bridge be closed to all types of use until the recommended repairs are completed.

98% of the un-burned pilings are at or below extensive deterioration and 99% of the condition of all the pilings are at or below extensive deterioration.

Additional Conversation Regarding the Trestle:

Kent Skaar states that when the last inspection of the bridge was completed in 2008, the bridge should have been closed due to its state of deterioration. Based on DNR standards routine inspections on bridges of this state of deterioration should be done annually.

Skaar states the bridge being over Coburn Creek is over a waterway that is jurisdictional water by the Army Corp of Engineers. That being said, the federal agency requests another inspection of the bridge. This will be completed by September 30th, 2015. DNR wants to know what SHPO thinks of their report replacing the pilings with square pilings vs. round pilings. If the design requires that more than 50% of the pilings and structure be replaced that the structure is no longer a historic structure. That being said, the structure would have to be removed from the historical register. Everything below the super structure (deck and railings) is on the historical registry. Because we are looking at up to 100% of replacement of the lower structure then it would have to be pulled from the national registry. In summary, given how much is gone there is no way it can stay on the registry. SHPO has asked to have another inspection completed by an engineer that specializes in bridges on the national registry. Chances are the result of this new inspection won't differ from the current one. What the SHPO is going to be considering in the inspection is if there is anything else that can be done to the bridge to keep it on the registry and rebuild so that it serves the need of biking/pedestrian and snowmobile traffic.

Regas asked how the Bridge made it on the registry in the state it was in if the deterioration to SHPO and the National Registry is so important. Skaar stated that SHPO was unaware at the time it was being registered. The information the SHPO asked for did not include that state. SHPO is more concerned with its state now.

The decking was replaced over 10 years ago before the 2008 inspection. That inspection when completed was done for replacement options, not continued use. It is not uncommon for other structures to have travel on them and the DNR not being aware of it. In the short term the DNR wants a reroute for the snowmobiles.

In 2015 there was \$500,000 appropriated by the legislature for the Trestle available until 2019. This money will not make enough of an impact on the structure based on the recommendations of the inspection.



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There will need to be additional conversation about how to proceed after the next inspection. There are several bridges in the state that are in the same state as the Trestle, however, not nearly as long. Those are being replaced primarily with culverts. The DNR is replacing them that way for less maintenance and cost.

The division's direction is where will the reroute go? What is the alternative to spending up to \$2 million? The DNR must follow the intent of the legislature which is to rehabilitate the structure. They will complete the inspections required but will not work on a design without further communication from the community. Rehabilitation remains a possibility but the DNR will not be seeking additional funding to fix the bridge. That additional funding may have to come from the community. There is additional funding available from the Historical Society for up to \$300,000 but the request has to come from the land owner. That being said, if the department were to apply for funding it would most likely go to other projects around the state before the Trestle. There are other programs that would assist through the snowmobile clubs and Legacy funds but the community would have to apply for them and they are limited amounts.

Regas asked what happened to the 'insurance' on the bridge. Was it insured? Craig Collison from MNDOT stated that the state is 'self-insured' so there is no claim/insurance on the bridge. Skaar stated that the fire itself didn't do any monetary damage. There wasn't any real damage to the bridge due to the amount of deterioration on the bridge. The bridge had depreciated any updates it had by the time of the fire.

Rep. Hancock asked how much of the \$500,000 had been used that was appropriated. Skaar stated none at this time.

Greg Nelson stated that when you are working with the Army Corp of Engineers one of the first things they will ask is "Is this the best alternative? Is there something better we can do?"

Craig asked if the bridge is no longer historic what it would cost to rebuild a more modern version with longer spans that can handle the loads needed for its use. Skaar stated that you still have needs for piles but not as many. But the DNR hasn't looked that far, they will when they consider alternatives. Skaar stated there is no conclusion at this point.

The snowmobile club has already looked for alternate route. Schotzko stated it was already pulled off the map. Jan Geerdes asked if it gets a lot of use. Underdahl stated many people from all over the state use it with ATV's, bikes, and snowmobiles. Anybody traveling in groups on ATV's uses this bridge. Skaar stated that, the Trestle and the Blue Ox Trail is a priority and the DNR recognizes its importance.

Councilor Christensen stated, "that if the bridge has to go away, I would be really disappointed if that corridor was rerouted somewhere else." Skaar stated again that question must be asked so that the trail keeps people on that corridor. Those questions get asked when any trail is being rerouted or considered to change its path. You need to consider if the town wants the trail to go through town or not. Schotzko asked if there is a route for the ATV's through town. Regas stated, "No only for snowmobiles, ATV's can only travel through alleys." Phil stated that where the trail is into town near the bridge is difficult in



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early winter for groomers and sleds when the ground isn't frozen yet. Skaar stated that nothing is off the table. All options will be considered in design.

Regas stated she believes there should be some innovative way to create another alternative for the bridge. Phil said its use means so much to Blackduck. Not everyone sees how much use it is getting but it is being used.

Craig Collison stated that until work is being done on the bridge it will be closed. The DOT will be putting up more permanent barricades so the bridge is not used.

Regas asked about what the City can do to drive funding? Skaar stated there are not many funding sources. But the DNR will pull together the list of sources that could be applied for regardless of who does apply.

Skaar stated he would continue getting any and all questions answered if needed.

More conversation was held regarding different types of trails and the future of the Blue Ox Trail being multi-use.

ADJOURN – Council adjourned their work session at 7:45pm.

Christina Regas, City Administrator

Daryl Lundberg, Mayor