

January 24, 2024

The Board of County Road Commissioners met at Cannon Township Hall, 6878 Belding Road, Rockford, for a Public Hearing in accordance with Michigan Act 451, Public Act 199 of 1994, Section 324.35702 of the State of Michigan for the purpose of discussing a Natural Beauty Road designation on 5 Mile Road from Dursum Avenue to Honey Creek Avenue in Cannon Township.

The Public Hearing was called to order by Commissioner Rob VerHeulen, Chair, at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Rob VerHeulen, Cynthia Janes, and Roger Morgan, Managing Director Jerry Byrne, Deputy Managing Director of Engineering Wayne Harrall, Director of Maintenance Steve Roon, Cannon Township Clerk Jim Alles, Human Resources Recruiter Beth Nanzer, Human Resources Coordinator Courtney Clifford, and Executive Secretary Karen Luneke.

Chair VerHeulen welcomed everyone and introduced the present Commissioners. He stated that Cannon Township has requested that Kent County Road Commission hold a Public Hearing to determine if the Road Commission Board should designate 5 Mile Road from Dursum Avenue to Honey Creek Avenue in Cannon Township a Natural Beauty Road. Commissioner VerHeulen asked that those with comments please state their first name, last name and address when they approach the podium. He explained that this Public Hearing is for comments only and there will be no decision made at the Public Hearing. The decision will be considered at the Board of Road Commissioners' meeting on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.

The following were also present:

Name	Address
Brad Streu	6280 5 Mile Road, NE
Michelle LeVeque	6280 5 Mile Road, NE
Dan Bailey	7825 Lake Circle, Belding
Jill Brouwer	7955 5 Mile Road, NE
Roger MacNaughton	6908 5 Mile Road, NE
Megan MacNaughton	6908 5 Mile Road, NE
Jeff Hill	430 Union Avenue, NE #106
Jeanne Billups	7337 Decosta Drive
Ted Billups	7337 Decosta Drive
Carey Seven	6730 5 Mile Road, NE
Brian Seven	6730 5 Mile Road, NE
Terry Brod	6960 E. Rain Garden Lane, NE
Paul W.	6535 5 Mile Road, NE

The following were not present, but sent comments to Wayne Harrall prior to the February 7, 2024, deadline:

Name	Address
Nikie and Brian Becknell	6901 5 Mile Road, NE
David Winick	3727 Dursum Avenue, NE
Reid Kruszewski	6564 Ada Drive
David Staublin	7565 Las Palmas Drive, NE
Jeffrey DeVries	7880 5 Mile Road, NE
Adam Koepfer	Sunflower Ridge Development
Scott and Marnie TenCate	6575 5 Mile Road, NE
Doug and Patty Brown	6520 5 Mile Road, NE
Kathryn Farmer	7570 5 Mile Road, NW

Chair VerHeulen stated that Deputy Managing Director Harrall will give a brief presentation on tonight's topic.

Deputy Managing Director Harrall stated that Cannon Township residents submitted a petition to the Township requesting to designate 5 Mile Road a Natural Beauty Road. Cannon Township forwarded the petition to the Board of Road

Commissioners. The Board must have a Public Hearing within six months of receiving the petition.

Deputy Managing Director Harrall stated the scheduled road improvement project for 5 Mile Road has been cancelled.

There is specific criteria for the designation of a natural beauty road. The public notice was posted in six places, as well as twice in the Grand Rapids Press. The criteria includes the following:

- Character of Road
- Length of Road
- Roadside Development
- Road Surface
- Function of the Road
- Speed of Road – set by the State Police

Mr. Harrall also made it known that the designation of the Natural Beauty Road would not impact road maintenance programs, safety improvements, or utility maintenance on 5 Mile Road.

Chair VerHeulen opened the meeting for comments.

Michelle LeVeque, 6280 5 Mile Road, NE, stated that there is so much beauty and it is a gorgeous road. She has lived there 20 years and bikes the area. It is so pretty and there are few roads left like 5 Mile Road. The road does not have a lot of traffic. Ms. LeVeque filed the petition. It is a respite from busy roads. She stated it is pure Michigan and should be designated a Natural Beauty Road because it meets the criteria.

Ted Billups, 7337 Decosta Drive, stated that it is his favorite place to walk and bike. There are behavioral differences between a gravel road vs. a paved road. This portion of 5 Mile is very safe for people to walk.

Brad Streu, 6280 5 Mile Road, thanked KCRC for considering the Natural Beauty Road designation. He loves how close the road is to the State Game area. He is a resident trail coordinator and bikers come in specifically to ride in that area with the North Country Trail so close by. There are many walkers, runners, and hikers that use the area, as well as recreational activities. People specifically are using the area because of the beauty of the road. Mr. Streu takes many beautiful fall photos. He has lived in the area for 12 years and appreciates the consideration.

Paul W., 6535 5 Mile Road, stated he has lived in the area since 2009. He mountain bikes the area. He would like KCRC to keep the area as nice as it is. It's not busy and is so quiet.

Brian Seven, 6730 5 Mile Road, stated he has lived on 5 Mile Road for 30 years. The road is beautiful. You get a sense of tranquility and feeling of safety. He cross-country skis, hikes and has raised his kids there. The North Country Trail and game area are the sole reason for buying the property.

Jill Brouwer, 7955 5 Mile Road, stated she has lived on 5 Mile for 12 years. It is a gorgeous area. She would rather walk down the road than other trails.

Megan MacNaughton, 6908 5 Mile Road, stated she was born and raised in New Jersey, and 5 Mile Road is just beautiful.

Monica Stit, 4647 Sunflower Ridge, stated her daughter is into backpacking and mountain biking. It is a health and wellness community there.

Chair VerHeulen thanked all of those in attendance for their comments. If there is anyone that would like to comment after this meeting, they may do so by emailing Wayne Harrall and, the comments will be in the minutes. The comments must be received by February 7, 2024. The decision will be made February 13, 2024, and will have the first opportunity to be discussed by the Board at the regular Board meeting that will be held at 1900 4 Mile Road, NW, Walker, MI 49544 beginning at 8:00 a.m. It is an open meeting, and the public is invited.

There being no further comments or questions to come before the Board, the hearing was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Additional comments emailed to KCRC:

From Nikie and Brian Becknell, 6901 5 Mile Road: I was not able to attend the meeting last night due to commitments with our kiddos but I didn't want to send a note in favor of the Natural Beauty Road Designation for 5 Mile Rd.

We live on 5 Mile and moved here about 1.5 years ago. We would hate to see it disturbed in any way given the natural beauty of it.

David Winick, 3727 Dursum Avenue, NE: Designating 5 Mile Road between Dursum and Honey Creek "A Natural Beauty Road" is an excellent goal. It's a lovely

stretch of road dividing the northern area of the Cannonsburg State Game Area. We've lived on Dursum for 22 years and love hiking and biking in this area.

We definitely are advocating for this designation.

Thanks for all your work keeping our gravel road maintained (Dursum) You guys do a great job.

Reid Kruszewski, 6564 Ada Drive: Hello, I just wanted to express my support for the 5 Mile Road natural beauty designation near Dursum Road in Kent County. I am an avid cyclist and recreate at the Cannonsburg State Game area, which is located throughout this road corridor.

I just wanted to ensure you are hearing from residents in support of the Natural Beauty road designation.

David Staublin, 7565 Las Palmas Drive, NE: I am writing to you to encourage the adoption of natural beauty road status for the one mile gravel section of 5 Mile Road in Cannon Township. As a resident of Cannon Township and an avid gravel cyclist and naturalist, I believe this section of road needs to be protected. I hope you are able to make this happen.

Jeff DeVries, 7880 5 Mile Road, NE: I understand that there was a Kent County Road Commission meeting last night to share information on the potential designation of a section of 5 Mile Road in Cannon Township as a natural beauty road. I was unable to attend the meeting, but I wanted to share my support for the designation. I live on this section of 5 Mile (7880) with my wife and children. We purchased our home on this road

largely due to the beauty of the surrounding area. We enjoy the road on a near daily basis whether it's walking, running, biking, or simply driving down it. I also understand that there is important vegetation and wildlife along this road that could be affected by any changes. There are few roads left in Kent County that still have this aesthetic appeal. Anything that can be done to preserve it in its current state would be welcomed, and I'd hate to see it changed in any way.

Thanks, and I would be happy to discuss and answer any question you might have.

Adam Koepfer, Sunflower Ridge development: I just wanted to reach out and voice my support of making the 1 mile section of 5 Mile Road between Dursum Avenue and Honey Creek Avenue a Natural Beauty Road.

My family and I recently purchased a new home off of 5 Mile Road (in the Sunflower Ridge development) and the nearby gravel and Natural Beauty roads were a big reason why. We are avid gravel cyclists and used to drive 40 minutes round trip just to experience the incredible roads in this area. We're so lucky to have them right out our front door now and I am excited to raise my two daughters in an area where they can enjoy the peaceful tranquility of these gravel roads.

Thank you for your consideration and please reach out if I can be of any assistance moving forward!

Scott and Marnie TenCate, 6575 5 Mile Road, NE: I was unable to attend the meeting Wednesday night since I'm out of the country. I heard you had a fantastic power point with some amazing photos of the road we live on. Sorry I missed that! As an official plant nerd and animal lover, I would love to see our road become a Natural Beauty Road

for many reasons. One of which-there is such a wide diversity of habitat along that stretch filled with some native species that rank high on our conservation value list. I have lots of favorites listed on our initial request but wanted to send a photo of 2 favorites!

Thanks again for all that you do to keep our roads safe and fun to walk our dogs and ride bikes on!

Thank you for your consideration and please reach out if I can be of any assistance moving forward!

Doug and Patty Brown, 6520 5 Mile Road, NE: We are in favor of making that last stretch of 5 Mile a Natural Beauty Rd if that can be done.

Kathryn Farmer, 7570 5 Mile Road, NE: I am a resident of the gravel portion of 5 mile road here in Cannonsburg. I was unable to attend the meeting held the other night, but I wanted to take some time to voice my support for designating our stretch of road as a natural beauty road. When my parents moved in thirty years ago, one of the big draws for them was the scene across the road from us at 7570. It's part of the state game area, and it's a large stretch of marsh that backs up to a line of trees. It's beautiful in all seasons, but especially in the autumn, when the trees race against each other to change color, making a patchwork one could gaze upon for hours. Though I am biased, I think it is one of the prettiest roads around.

Thank you for all the time and consideration you all have put into working with us members of the Cannonsburg community.