

**SHAMROCK TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC HEARING
Tuesday, October 28, 2025**

Vice-Chair Tom Meyer called the Public Hearing to order at 5:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Supervisor Ernie Darlow; Supervisor Brock Hayes; Treasurer Jack Brula; Clerk Candace Kral; Troy Gilchrist, Town Law Center, Chair Ron Flatten was present arriving approx. 20 minutes after starting and 21 property owners in person and 19 via Zoom connections; however, as some participants shared devices.

Tom Meyer explained that the purpose of the hearing was to gather information and discuss the Subordinate Service District (SSD) Petition previously presented to the Board regarding the proposed asphaltting of 498th Lane and 210th Place. He then turned the Public Hearing over to Troy Gilchrist, the township attorney. Following this, Tom Meyer excused himself from the board table, as he is a participant in the original petition. He remained in attendance as an affected resident and abstained from any board discussion or decision on the matter.

Mr. Gilchrist introduced himself, highlighting his experience and specialization in town law. He provided an overview of the process and steps involved in forming an SSD, explaining both the township's role and the responsibilities of the affected residents. He outlined that residents would be responsible for covering costs associated with engineering, attorney fees, the township's financing of the project through a bond, interest on loan payments over time, certain subgrade road improvements, and the asphaltting itself. He also explained that the property owners paying for the project are those that are listed or shown on the subordinate district map. Stating that those who drive the roads listed in the petition to get to their roads but are not show in the map are not responsible for the cost, they will not be assessed.

He emphasized that the township can only provide general cost estimates, as exact costs cannot be determined until the project is completed. Mr. Gilchrist further explained that if the Board decides to move forward with the requested SSD for road improvements, a resolution will be passed. This resolution will then be published and sent to affected property owners, who will have the opportunity to challenge it through a reverse referendum, requiring at least 25% of property owners to file a petition. If no reverse referendum is filed, the Board may proceed with the project.

Supervisor Ernie Darlow reported consulting with RoCon Paving, a local blacktop company near McGrath, and a dirt contractor experienced with culverts and road preparation. While not engineers, both have extensive experience with similar road projects in the Mille Lacs Lake area.

Preliminary rough estimates for paving 498th Lane and 210th Place were shared. The first section, from 202nd Place to just past Hillcrest Bar (approx. 2,268 feet), was estimated at \$165,000 for a 20-foot-wide asphalt surface with minimal grading. The second section, from Hillcrest Bar to the cul-de-sac (approx. 3,700 feet), was estimated at \$544,250, including curb and gutter to address runoff and drainage concerns. Installation of curb and gutter could manage stormwater with less ditching or tree removal; costs could be reduced by \$175,000 without curb and gutter, but additional excavation and drainage work would likely be needed.

Right-of-way widths vary from 66 to 33 feet, limiting traditional ditching options. Total preliminary cost for both sections with curb and gutter: \$739,000. Mr. Darlow emphasized these are general estimates, not formal bids.

Residents raised questions and concerns:

- **Alternative materials:** A resident on Zoom asked about using recycled or ground blacktop. A board member noted success on a small stretch near a home, but County Engineer John Welly cautioned that a similar project near Long Lake Conservation Camp failed. Recycled materials are suitable for temporary repairs but not long-term solutions.
- **Petition purpose:** Another resident questioned whether the petition was for cost information. The board clarified it authorizes the township to proceed with improvements. Detailed cost estimates require engineering design and cannot be provided before approval.
- **Road standards:** Another resident referenced 2004 township road specifications, noting deficiencies in width, crown, and Class 5 gravel. The board explained existing roads predate these standards and are “grandfathered,” with specifications mainly for new roads or developments.
- **Drainage and erosion:** Residents noted runoff damaging yards, driveways, and roads, sometimes toward the lake. The board stated proper grading and ditch work would be included if the project moves forward and encouraged reporting problem areas.
- **Assessment and district boundaries:** Residents questioned which properties would be included. Township representatives clarified that properties outside the district would not be assessed, though boundaries could be adjusted. Costs would be assessed across the entire district, not by road section, unless the project were scaled down. Discussion included estimated 63 parcels, buildable status, and combining parcels under one PID number does not legally merge properties.
- **Project details and timing:** Residents asked about grants, duration, and the bid process. Bridge Road was cited as a recent example of a two-week construction timeline, though the proposed project would require additional grading and drainage work. Supervisors confirmed no personal or business involvement in the project. If approved, the project would likely occur in 2027, with the township coordinating with the county as in prior projects.
- **Petition and referendum:** The resident-initiated petition garnered 56% of signatures. A reverse referendum requires only 25% opposition to halt the project; ballots are limited to property owners, including non-local owners. Past referendums rarely passed and typically delayed projects, increasing costs.

Supervisor Ernie Darlow expressed hesitation about moving forward with blacktopping new roads at this time. He noted that many existing roads still require maintenance and that

paving could create long-term financial obligations, including ongoing maintenance, crack filling, seal coating, and line repainting, which require specialized equipment the township does not own. He emphasized that property owners would continue to bear costs for installation, maintenance, and taxes for the road, and stated that his position was opposed to proceeding with the project.

Residents were encouraged to submit comments via email to document their opinions. The board emphasized the need for more information of the property owners', their opinions, before making final decisions.

The board discussed continuing the hearing. Supervisor Ernie Darlow stated that, for the reasons previously noted, he believes the hearing should be concluded.

Motion by Ron Flatten, seconded by Brock Hayes, to continue the public hearing to November 25th at 6:00 pm. It was stated that attendance may be difficult as the date is two days before Thanksgiving. The motion was withdrawn.

Motion by Ron Flatten, seconded by Brock Hayes, to continue the public hearing to December 2, 2025. Motion passed as follows: Ron Flatten – Yay; Brock Hayes – Yay; Ernie Darlow – Nay.

Candace Kral
Clerk

Ron Flatten
Board Chairman

MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT THE NOVEMBER 13, 2025, REGULAR BOARD MEETING