

Wells County Drainage Board Minutes  
Monday - April 17, 2023 4:30 P.M.

The Wells County Drainage Board met in a regular scheduled meeting at the Wells Carnegie Government Annex, 223W. Washington St., Multi-Purpose Room 105, (Lower Level), Bluffton, Indiana.

Drainage Board members present: Voting members Blake Gerber, Michael K. Vanover, Jeff Stringer; Attorney Ted Storer, Engineer Nate Rumschlag, Surveyor Jarrod Hahn, Secretary Diana Collins.

Determination of Quorum:

A quorum was present for the meeting.

Minutes:

Mr. Gerber opened the Drainage Board meeting with the first item on the agenda to approve the Board's regular meeting minutes on April 3, 2023.

Mr. Vanover motioned to approve the Drainage Board regular meeting minutes on April 3, 2023 as amended. Mr. Stringer 2<sup>nd</sup>. Concurred by Mr. Gerber, motion carried 3-0.

Beall Meyer open Drain Easement-Lancaster Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that landowners Kyle W. & Deone M. Gerber on property 1592N 600E, Bluffton in Lancaster Township, section 25, range 12E filed a "Petition and Approval to Locate Structures within County Drain Easement" to be in the easement of the Beall Meyer open drain to install a 15-foot stone driveway. Hahn presented a detailed map of the area and explained the driveway will be along the Beall Meyer open drain for approximately 550 feet then turning west away from the ditch to build a home. Hahn noted that the landowners will have a couple of obstacles one being crossing the pipeline, and for Bluffton Utilities to get electricity on property for a home. Hahn recommends approving the easement allowing the driveway structure to be in the easement no closer than 25 feet from the top of the Beall Meyer open drain.

Mr. Stringer motioned to approve Kyle W. & Deone M. Gerber property on 1592N 600E, Bluffton, IN 46714 in Lancaster Township, section 25, range 12E to be in the easement of the Beall Meyer open drain no closer than 25 from the top of the bank as recommended. Mr. Vanover 2<sup>nd</sup>. Concurred by Mr. Gerber, motion carried 3-0.

Tappy Tile Drain-Liberty Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned a landowner in the Town of Poneto had called him before today's meeting asking for the paper work to file a "Petition and Approval to Locate Structures within County Drain Easement" in Liberty Township, section 36, range 11E. Hahn mentioned the easement is on the Tappy tile drain that was put in 2012 by the Town of Poneto who also paid to replace the Tappy tile with a 24-inch. Hahn noted that the landowner did not file a building permit to put the structure up from the Area Planning Commission to build and is currently in violation. Hahn mentioned that the landowner has owned the property for many years and has built a building with a lean-to over the 24-inch tile.

Hahn asked, what do you want me to do with this situation? The Board asked several questions on concerning the size of tile, if it breaks down, how long has the landowners lived there, have the previous Board members approved a structure being built over a tile, is there currently any structures built over a tile have they been rerouting and is this an option on this residency and also would it be feasible on the tile and the grade. Hahn the drainage easement is 75-foot easement, IC 36-9-27-33 allows down to 15-feet and just recently added down to 7.5 feet but we as a county traditionally stay at 25-foot easement from either side of the tile or top of bank. County Engineer Nate Rumschlag mentioned that this large tile serves as a main infrastructure for the whole town of Poneto therefore is worth protecting the easement. After the Board heard the answers and gave careful consideration, they are not in favor of permitting for this newly built structure. Hahn mentioned that he has not been out to look at the structure on property to decide if the tile is truly under the building and/or if they can even reroute the tile on their property. Hahn will keep the Board informed as the details come in.

Update Projects:

Maple Creek Open Drain- Lancaster Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that a contractor has completed a bottom clean out on the upper-end of Maple Creek open drain in Lancaster Township, section 1, range 12E and in section 6, range 13E in the area of 500N and 600E.

Continued April 17, 2023

8-Mile Open Drain-Union Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that a landowner called to report about a beaver dam who believes the beavers have left the area in Union Township, section 12 range 11E. Hahn noted some of the dam debris is still in place with a portion of the debris has moved on down the channel. Hahn will continue to observe the remaining dam debris to see if it moves on down the channel with spring rains.

Somers Open Drain-Lancaster Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that a contractor had completed removing a logjam on the Somers open drain in Lancaster Township, section 9, range 12E in the area of 175E and 500N.

Flat Creek Open Drain-Union Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that a contractor had completed removing a logjam on the Flat Creek open drain in Union Township, section 8, range 11E in the area of Marzane Rd and 1000N.

Tile Repair Reports-County Wide:

Mr. Hahn has mentioned that there have been several reports of down tile this spring and have notified contractors to make those repairs as the weather allows.

2023 Spray Program-North:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that he is working on the spray maps for any changes such as any tree removal along a ditch bank to add map before we send the map to the contractor. Hahn noted that the spray notices will go out to the affected landowners who live along a ditch at the end of May. Hahn noted that Chad Baker of Right-a-Way Management will be spraying this year to begin in the middle of June and as weather permits at that time.

Wells County Engineer Nate Rumschlag Report:

Mr. Rumschlag mentioned that he will have the Highway crew work on an emergency repair where a sink hole appeared on 1000S just east of Meridian in Nottingham Township, section 19, range 12E. Rumschlag noted that he has called in locates to make repair or at least patch it for now. Rumschlag noted the old clay 12-inch tile runs along 1000S and has been worked on before a few years ago through a bridge project. Rumschlag mentioned that Hahn is working with the farmer in the area to possibly move the tile out into the field and out of the road right-of-way.

Bills Creek Property Claim-Out of Watershed:

Mr. Gerber asked Mr. Hahn if he had looked into Mr. Roehs claim that he had no water going into Bills Creek along with a couple other neighboring properties that received notices too. Mr. Hahn noted after hearing he had talked to Mr. Roehs and another landowner which there are conflicting stories on the City of Bluffton putting in a tile, a mutual tile, and a detention pond that drains to the north that goes directly in the Wabash, or if the City of Bluffton put in a tile or the mutual tile that empties in Bills Creek to the west. Hahn will continue to investigate to verify Mr. Roehs claims further.

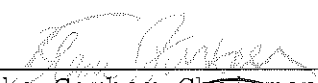
Legislation Bills:

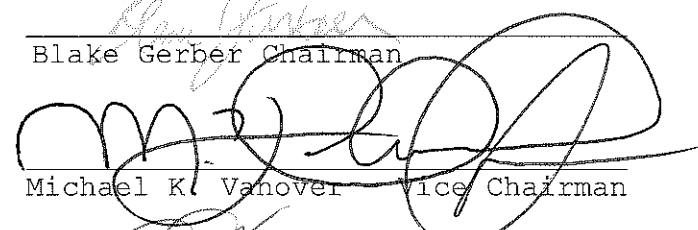
Mr. Gerber mentions HB1639. Mr. Hahn touched on HB1639-Watershed development commissions proposed watershed development commission affecting surrounding counties in the Upper Wabash River Basin Commission and the Maumee River Basin Commission and is still moving with a lot of amendments added to the bill. SB242-Floodplain mapping data created through the use of lidar is still moving with several amendments at this time but went from bad to worse and is still moving. Hahn noted that both bills are important to Wells County and will continue to keep watch.


Adjournment:


Mr. Vanover motioned to adjourn the Drainage Board meeting at 4:54 p.m. Mr. Stringer 2nd. Concurred by Mr. Gerber, motion carried 3-0.

Next regular scheduled Drainage Board meeting is Monday-May 1, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

  
Blake Gerber Chairman

  
Michael K. Vanover Vice Chairman

  
Jeff Stringer Member  
WELLS COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD

ATTEST:   
Diana L. Collins  
WELLS COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD SECRETARY