

Minutes—MSLA Emergency Road Meeting—June 27, 2015

**Minutes for MSLA Emergency Road Meeting**

Red Rock Steakhouse & Saloon Porch

Red Rock, Texas

11:30AM – Saturday, June 27, 2015

MSLA landowners were informed of meeting via a postcard announcement from MSLA Trustees postmarked June 18, 2015. Purpose of meeting was to discuss hazardous driving conditions caused by heavy, flooding rains in May and early June of this year. Of particular concern is the bridge/culvert on Sand Hills Road crossing Sandy Creek, which divides the front half from the back half of the MSLA Subdivision.

Present were Trustees, Ed Dupnick, Jim Williams, Joe Dickson and Reza Pouraghabagher, who all addressed the landowners on various issues. John Livingston also addressed the issue of the bridge repair. Approximately 20 landowners were in attendance.

- Ed Dupnick opened the meeting and handed out a flyer containing an *Austin-American Statesman* newspaper article about a Bastrop County Commissioner's Court vote to provide a county maintained road for a community of landowners whose access to their land was destroyed around the time of the Memorial Day floods. The back of the flyer also contained contact information for county officials. Also handed out was a business card with contact information for the MSLA Trustees. The email address to contact Trustees is [msla-trustees@googlegroups.com](mailto:msla-trustees@googlegroups.com). They have also set up a Google app whereby a landowner may call this telephone number, ~~512-766-6752~~, and leave a voice ~~message which will be transmitted~~ to each Trustee's email account. The handouts have been reproduced as an appendix to these minutes.

- The main discussion was dealing with the bridge/culvert where Sand Hills Road crosses Sandy Creek, between the Sandy Creek Road and Fealy Road intersections. Heavy rains overflowed the bridge several times in the past month. Volunteers, using their own tractors, worked to remove blockage of brush and tree limbs and trunks which kept being swept over the upstream culvert openings and clogging the water flow under the bridge. On June 15, the weekly Donnie Stark Garbage Service truck passed over the bridge and the concrete top caved in, opening up a large hole, about 3 feet in diameter. Volunteers, including George Doss, Joey Dickson, and Jim Williams worked to fill the hole to make a temporary repair. Examination showed much of the underlying fill around the three culvert pipes was washed away, leaving significant areas of hollow space under the thin concrete topping of the bridge. It was realized the bridge was a danger to vehicle passage, and could not be trusted to carry larger vehicles. A long term repair was obviously required, as this construction, dating back to the late 1980's was dependent on a solid fill under the concrete to maintain its integrity, and that fill was now severely undermined. The bridge, in its current condition, has now reached the end of its useful life.

Minutes—MSLA Emergency Road Meeting—June 27, 2015

A proposal for repair was offered by Joey Dickson and John Livingston. A TXDOT engineer was consulted and offered a professional opinion on repairs. Given our limited financial resources, the following action plan has been put forward to ensure driver's safety and a durable repair. First, the thin layer of concrete making up the bridge surface will be crushed with heavy equipment. That broken material and additional recycled concrete will be used to fill the spaces around the culvert and to build up the surface to match the roadway intersecting it on each end. The slope protection on each side of the bridge, which is intended to seal around the pipes will be left in place. It might be necessary to add one additional large culvert pipe. A load-bearing structural concrete slab will be built over the top of this crushed concrete and rock filling. This slab will be at least 6" in depth, with reinforcing steel bars in place so it will serve to hold weight even if it was not fully supported underneath. The existing concrete top had only a small diameter steel mesh and is very thin, so it depends fully on support underneath it to hold it up, and as the fill under it has been washed away by years of flood waters leaking through cracks and holes in the concrete, it failed from the weight of the truck on it.

Bids have been proffered to accomplish the bridge rebuilding. Terra Excavation will do the concrete work at a price of \$8500. Another contractor will coordinate with them in advance and break up the existing bridge top and build up the fill between the culvert pipes. This breakup and fill work will cost approximately \$1800. During the construction, the bridge will not be passable to vehicles. It is estimated that at least 48 hours will be needed after pouring and finishing before the new concrete slab may be driven on. Adding the time required for construction before the new slab is in place will create a possible time frame of up to a week where landowners who live beyond the bridge will not be able to drive over it. John Livingston and Joey Dickson worked on acquiring these bids and have obtained excellent prices for a very demanding job. The white crushed rock now stockpiled on the road above the bridge was brought in for emergency use if needed. We were told that a 12-cubic yard load of this rock costs the community \$300. The MSLA treasury currently has a balance of \$15,400.

These solutions to ingress/egress during the repair were offered. Landowners who have more than one vehicle may want to park one on the West side of the bridge so as to be able to drive out, and leave another on the East side of the bridge to give access back to their home. There will also be possible shuttle service by volunteers to take landowners from their home to the bridge, if they only have one vehicle to use. Mike Kelley was one landowner who volunteered to shuttle people to the bridge. The properties on the left side of Sand Hills Road as one is driving out, immediately adjoining Sandy Creek on each side of the bridge, have been offered by their owners as temporary parking areas for landowners to park vehicles. During construction, some provision will be made for landowners to cross the creek to get access to their cars on the town side of the bridge.

This information was conveyed about the load capacity of the new bridge, as regarding large trucks which might need to pass over it:

1. The garbage truck that broke through the bridge was weighed and its weight was 30,000 lbs.

Minutes—MSLA Emergency Road Meeting—June 27, 2015

2. 12 Cubic Yard capacity dump trucks bringing gravel for road work weigh 24,000 lbs.
3. Fire trucks require bridge load-bearing capacities of up to 55,000 lbs.
4. All of the above, as well as concrete trucks carrying concrete for homeowners' building purposes, will be able to pass over the NEW bridge safely.
5. Also, the trustees will put a sign warning people that the bridge is under repair and they should "travel at their own risk."

The landowners in attendance voted affirmatively to accept this proposal to repair the bridge. Terra Excavation will need approximately 3 weeks lead time to schedule the work on our bridge. Landowners on the East side of the bridge, those whose access across the bridge will be affected, will all need to be notified in advance when the schedule for bridge work firms up. The planning and commitment for the repair has begun, and landowners will be notified as construction details are confirmed.

- Other related topics discussed were that James Harris volunteered to research public records on the Bastrop Central Appraisal District database to compile landowner information. This will include making a list of landowners on the East side of the bridge who will need to be notified of the bridge repair work schedule. Also, (1) a compilation of the number of MSLA landowners who are residents, so as to quantify the number of potential registered voters in our subdivision; and (2) a compilation of the assessed values of the properties in the subdivision and an estimate of yearly property taxes paid by the subdivision will be prepared. This information will serve to document the tax base of our subdivision, and the number of voters. It was suggested that a group of landowners attend a Bastrop County Commissioner's Court meeting and testify as to the need for some county help with our road and bridge. It was felt that having some precise data on our aggregated tax base and voting potential would carry more weight with the officials than if individuals tried to each make a case for their own personal situation. The County Judge was sympathetic to the previous private road issue caused by the recent floods, and it was expressed that we need to raise our voices in unison to begin to have the county take notice of our situation with our private roads in the subdivision. FEMA funding has been made available to Texas as a result of the disastrous recent floods, and it was suggested that the MSLA should look into discussing this with county officials.

There is no assurance of any assistance, but it was pointed out that unless we express ourselves, the county will certainly not be aware of any of our issues. A congruent issue is the continued rise in property tax appraisals with the strong growth in Bastrop County. The appraisal district bases property taxes on what they term as "comparable" property values gained from real estate sales. The problem with our subdivision's appraisals is that they are grouped with other properties that have paved county or state road access to their homes. Our deficient road and bridge are not being accounted for, and we thus have less support from county services with our tax dollars than other property owners outside our subdivision. These points were raised and a future initiative will be considered for some MSLA

Minutes—MSLA Emergency Road Meeting—June 27, 2015  
volunteers to see what might be gained from calling and meeting with county officials such as the County Judge and our Precinct 2 Commissioner.

Other issues mentioned:

- Dropping loads of gravel base alongside the road, spaced out over the full extent of the roads. This gravel could then be used by volunteers, acting singly or coordinating with neighbors, using their tractors, wheelbarrows and/or shovels to fill potholes. This would keep the road in better repair without any major maintainer expense and would not be a major burden on anyone, because if the pothole filling were distributed like this, a landowner filling only a few potholes adjacent to their property would have a positive impact.

- Discussion of an alternative route out of the subdivision in the event of emergencies such as fires and floods which might block off the normal access to the west towards Red Rock. There is a rough road out the back end of the subdivision at the end of Sand Hills Road, routed up to and around the cell tower and across the McReynolds property to gain access to FM304 on the east end of the subdivision. There were issues with this route with the recent floods as the McReynolds found they were trapped from getting out to FM304 and had to gain access in a reverse pattern out on our (Sand Hills) road. Bette Stockbauer-Harris will explore the option of gaining access by this route by contact with the McReynolds family.

- The Donnie Stark Garbage Company truck will not tempt fate again by crossing the broken bridge/culvert at Sandy Creek until repairs are made. It was proposed that people can bring their garbage cans up Sand Hills Road and leave them at the beginning of the road next to the MSLA sign. Then residents from the East of the bridge who are not getting their garbage picked up in the interval before bridge repairs are made could drop off a garbage bag on a trip out.

- Trustee Ed Dupnick recalled this conversation with Ted Bowers, one of the resident landowners, who noted that he works for the city of Bastrop and knows Judge Pape well. I believe Bowers said that Pape knew of the McElwreath private road situation and was preparing to send a letter to Precinct 2 Commissioner John Klaus to address this problem but dealing with the aftermath of the 2012 Bastrop fires pushed the issue aside. Nonetheless, Bowers believes that Pape is still willing to support the county taking over the private McElwreath roads. Bowers suggests to set up a meeting with Pape (Bowers will orchestrate) with a group of landowners to state their (our) case for county maintenance. Accordingly, James Harris volunteered to tally the voting power and the asset value of the residents affected by the compromised culvert over Sandy Creek. A final plan needs to be developed to coordinate and schedule a meeting with Pape, a group of informed and articulate landowners, and statistics to underscore the importance of our request.