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Eighth Street contract approved

Tentative start date of May 6: Colburn

BY JORDAN TRAVIS jtravis@record-eagle.com Apr 16, 2019



People drive along Eighth Street in Traverse City.

Record-Eagle file photo/Jordan Travis

TRAVERSE CITY — Eighth Street is less than a month away from a three-block overhaul if construction starts when planned.

Traverse City commissioners unanimously approved a contract Monday after seeing the long-sought project's final design and after they posed a few questions about its particulars. They agreed to award a \$4,120,390.25 contract to Elmer's Crane and Dozer, which submitted the lower of the two bids, to build it.

Road work tentatively could begin May 6, City Manager Marty Colburn said.

It'll require the road's closure until Aug. 30, as previously reported. Work will continue after that date, with some lane closures and shifts necessary.

Colburn told commissioners the plans include some of the adjustments they requested, including larger trees of native species and wider sidewalks and bicycle tracks.

"I'm very excited about this this evening, as we've been working on this for several years now," he said

The design includes a new, 30-foot-wide-road from Boardman Avenue to Woodmere Avenue, as previously reported. It'll have one lane in either direction plus a center turn lane, with a few mid-block crosswalks with center-lane islands and pedestrian-activated flashing warning lights mounted below the crossing signs. Tree lawns, sidewalks and bicycle tracks will flank the road on either side.

The project also includes some underground utility work, including upgrading the water main below Eighth Street.



Colburn

Commissioner Tim Werner raised several questions about the project's design elements and how pedestrian-friendly they are. He asked about crossing distances for walkers headed across side streets, and whether lighting at crosswalks will be adequate.

Brian Boals, project manager with engineering firm Gourdie Fraser Associates responded, saying he could take another look at the crosswalks' alignment. He also said he could double-check a photometric plan done for the project to ensure there's enough lighting at the crosswalks.

But the road won't be as brightly lit as West Front Street was after that recent construction and streetscaping project, Boals and Colburn told Mayor Jim Carruthers.

"It's an appropriate photometric plan," Boals said.

Colburn told Commissioner Richard Lewis that Monday's agenda item didn't include a previously discussed special improvement district to split costs for streetscaping elements of the project with property owners along the project area.

That subject should wait for another meeting, Commissioner Brian McGillivray said. He pointed out there are other unknowns about the project's funding, including \$400,000 in state funding not yet in hand.

Steve Nance, audience member and North Boardman Lake District President, asked for no special assessment, unless it's for a "phase two" involving more streetscaping items. He echoed Todd Klepper, another North Boardman Lake District board member, in pointing out that most property



Werner

owners were asked to give up an easement for sidewalks for the project, and, in some cases, their driveway on to Eighth Street.

Both Klepper and Nance said they were glad to see the project's about to begin.

"We really think this sets the tone for the area for generations to come," Klepper said.

Dispensary applications questioned

TRAVERSE CITY — There's an apparent effort to stack the deck ahead of Traverse City's drawing for its 13 medical marijuana dispensary licenses.

City Clerk Ben Marentette said some applicants seem to be attempting to game the process and city ordinance, as there are multiple applicants listing the same address as a possible location.

Mayor Jim Carruthers said 11 applicants filed for one address. He forwarded to Marentette and city commissioners a letter he received from a law firm raising the issue and raised it himself at commissioners' meeting Monday.

City ordinance attempted to stop people from creating shell corporations and submitting multiple applications, city Commissioner Amy Shamroe said.

People who formed separate corporations could ask to transfer license ownership to include others who submitted applications for the same piece of property as they did, Marentette said. He pointed to indications in the "paper trail" that some applicants who appear to be separate are actually connected.

Commissioner Michele Howard called it frustrating but said she believes city leaders who worked on the ordinance did the best they could.

The drawing is on May 3, as previously reported.

Marentette said the process is to draw and number each application that's been pre-vetted out of the more than 70 he's received. The first 13 on the list have six months to pass all inspections and a background check and submit proof of whether they have control over a piece of property. Anyone who can't apply within six months wouldn't get the license, which would go to the next applicant on the list.

Mike Corcoran, an attorney for a medical marijuana license applicant, told commissioners they still have time to address the issue by limiting applicants to one property per, even if it means refunding the \$5,000 application fee to some applicants.

"You're worried about being litigated? Once those ping pong balls have been drafted or have been drawn, then you've got real problems," he said.



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