

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Thursday, February 1, 1990

7:00 p.m. Public Meeting - Proposed Best and Chilberg Road County Road Project. (Rexville Grange)

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, February 1, 1990, at 7:00 p.m., with Commissioners Dave Rohrer and Ruth Wylie present. Commissioner Vaux's absence was excused.

PUBLIC MEETING - PROPOSED BEST AND CHILBERG ROAD COUNTY ROAD PROJECT.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., because of some confusion regarding the time for the meeting to begin.

Chairman Wylie welcomed those present and instructed them to limit their remarks to three minutes.

Mark Spahr, Public Works Department Director, introduced Robin LaRue, Design and Construction Supervisor. On a vicinity map, Mr. Spahr pointed out the area of the Chilberg Road curve. The map identified major collectors, minor collectors and State routes. Mr. Spahr explained that the County is required to maintain an updated Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Skagit County. The County has adopted a somewhat aggressive plan for improving road standards, which has resulted in the entire portion of Chilberg Road, as well as McLean Road, to be upgraded to the standard of a major collector, except for the portion of road identified as the Chilberg Road curve. Mr. Spahr stated that tonight's discussion will pertain to the County's intention to bring that curved portion of Chilberg Road up to the current standards of the connecting roads.

Robin LaRue reviewed proposed alternatives for the upgrade of the portion of road.

Alternative #1 would allow the section of road to remain on the present alignment. Improvement in shoulder width and drainage would be performed.

Alternative #2 would realign the section of road to utilize Rudene Road, eliminating the Y intersection south of the Rudene Road, but cul de sacking the Chilberg Road leading to the Y for property access. On the remainder of the road, the curve radius would be increased to allow for 35 m.p.h. curves. This would require more right-of-way to accomplish.

Alternative #3 would involve the construction of new roadway across a field to the north, linking the Chilberg Road with the Best-Calhoun Road intersection. The Y intersection would also be eliminated in this plan and a cul de sac would be constructed as in Alternative #2.

Mr. LaRue explained that no further road work will be undertaken until a decision is made on which alternative to follow.

A letter from Mr. and Mrs. Ib Knoblauch, property owners on the corner of Best and Calhoun Road, was introduced. The Knoblauch's favor a reconstruction of

the Y intersection similar to Alternative #2. They oppose Alternative #3 because of concerns that speeding vehicles headed for LaConner will endanger normal farm traffic on Chilberg Road.

Public testimony was then taken.

John Roozen, 1784 Chilberg Road, felt the Chilberg/Best Road Y intersection allows the most effective movement of traffic. He felt a four-way stop such as that in Alternative #3 at Chilberg/Best/Calhoun Road would cause a bottleneck. He felt that, allowing the road to remain on its present alignment but using some additional right-of-way obtained from the Fohn farm located at the curve of Chilberg Road to soften the curve would be the best solution.

Kirby Johnson, 1848 Chilberg Road, agreed with Mr. Roozen. He advocated a right turn lane at the Rudene Road, blocking off the right hand lane to allow one-way traffic only from Rudene down to the Y intersection at Chilberg and Best.

Bob Marak preferred Alternative #3. He stated that with the present road alignment the line of sight when exiting Joe Fohn's farm is blocked.

Clint Stroebal, 1849 Valentine Road, stated that when exiting Valentine Road onto Best Road, cars from the direction of the Best/Chilberg Road Y are traveling so fast it is dangerous to enter the Best Road lane of travel. He felt that if Chilberg Road is upgraded, cars will be encouraged to go even faster.

John Summer, 1294C Summers Drive, felt that the backroads in South Mount Vernon are developing into an alternative route to I-5. He was concerned that creating a straight of way such as that suggested in Alternative #3 would further increase the speed of vehicles. He wished the County to maintain the present grade.

Steve Egbers, 1750 Chilberg Road, had similar complaints to those of Mr. Stroebal, particularly when driving his dump truck. He preferred Alternative #3.

Phil Jennings, 1610 Best Road, supported Alternative #3.

Oliver Pearson, 1231 Calhoun Road, was opposed to Alternative #3 because he felt it would encourage vehicles to increase their speed. Mr. LaRue gave information on the number of cars utilizing Chilberg and Best Roads per day. Approximately an equal number turn off on Chilberg as remain on Best.

Joe Fohn, 1175 Chilberg Road, asked what the County engineers felt would be the best proposal.

Mr. Spahr referred to Chilberg Road's compatibility with other, better roads, stating that the curve is presently incompatible with other roads. He stated that Alternative #3 is the most compatible with the rest of the roadway system.

Laura Hill, 171 Best Road, questioned why the road had to be brought up to these standards. She demonstrated other corners in the area that are limited to 25 m.p.h. speeds. She felt that by maintaining the current grade, adding guardrails, and signing appropriately to show the main route to LaConner, the current roadway would be improved sufficiently to remain as is. She felt that people who objected to pulling out from the Y intersection should choose an alternate route.

Dorothy Stevens, 1854 Valentine Road, stated that changes to Chilberg Road may move traffic down to Dodge Valley Road, which would then need to be upgraded.

Dave Alvord, P.O. Box 255, LaConner, had no preference as to which Alternative should be chosen, but did not like the Y intersection at Best and Chilberg.

Edgar Stuart was opposed to the County taking part of his yard to smooth the curve as in Alternative #1. Mr. LaRue felt that 5 to 10 extra feet of right-of-way may be necessary to alter the curve.

Mrs. Stuart was also concerned about her yard being taken. She noted that people sell things at the Y intersection, causing traffic problems.

Charles Elliot, Calhoun Road, felt Alternative #3 would help the area by providing an upgraded drainage ditch. He felt that school bus traffic would also be safer.

Arnie Fohn, 1175 Chilberg Road, noted that if Alternative #2 or #3 were done, the curve nearest LaConner could be left at 25 m.p.h. to slow speeding cars.

Bill Roozen approved of Alternative #3. He felt that with proper signage and increased traffic patrol, speeds could be kept under control. Above all, he wished the County to make permanent changes, rather than interim solutions to the traffic problem.

Bud Moore, Mayor of LaConner, also felt Alternative #3 would add more traffic to Dodge Valley. He suggested another alternative might be to link with Best Road further south of Calhoun.

Mr. Spahr noted that Mayor Moore's suggestion had been reviewed, but was not popular with property owners, as it renders one area of farmland cut off from agricultural production. Mr. Spahr noted that Alternative #3 disturbs virtually no farmland.

Bertha Fohn, 1172 Chilberg Road, stated that this is the fourth time a discussion has been held on realignment of Chilberg Road over the years, and each time a few people have objected and blocked the project. This time she hoped the road would be fixed. She favored Alternative #3.

Kirby Johnson suggested that the intersection at Calhoun/Best/Chilberg Roads could be constructed like a Y intersection with a free right turn.

Henrietta Pearson, 1231 Calhoun Road, stated that the signage on Calhoun Road just before its intersection with Best Road states "50 m.p.h." She felt it is impossible to reach 50 m.p.h. before encountering a 35 m.p.h. curve.

Bjorn Swenson, Box 752, LaConner, suggested that the entire curve be cut off and Chilberg Road realigned to pass over Pleasant Ridge, past the cemetery, and connect with Valentine Road.

Mr. Spahr pointed out that this would require bridging a 70 foot downhill span.

Mr. Roozen predicted a stop light at Calhoun/Best/Chilberg if Alternative #3 is followed. He again recommended a Y intersection.

Winda Swenson of Upper Dodge Valley Road asked what the future plans for Dodge Valley Road are.

Mr. LaRue responded that there are no plans for Dodge Valley Road on the Six-Year Road Program. It is classified as an access road and will be maintained accordingly.

Dorothy Stevens remarked on the extremely heavy tourist traffic in the area during the tulip bloom season.

Mr. Spahr stated that traffic engineering cannot design roads for festival traffic. Traffic solutions must be worked out with local law enforcement.

Regarding the use of a Y intersection at Calhoun/Best/Chilberg Roads, utilizing Alternative #3, Mr. Spahr indicated that, while a Y intersection is an efficient way of moving traffic in a rural area, it has been proven that a T intersection is safer in higher traffic areas. Mr. Spahr noted that the area in question has changed now from a rural area. Although accidents have occurred at Best and Calhoun Roads over the years, the Public Works Department's analysis of each accident has been unable to determine a consistent cause for the accidents. Rumble bars and large warning signs have been installed to no avail.

The group further discussed the utilization of a Y intersection, and Mr. Spahr agreed that a free right turn might be possible at that location.

Laura Hill maintained that people coming into the area should simply be required to slow down, rather than the roads be improved to support their increased speed.

Greg Johnson, 1700 B Best Road, had questions regarding the access of his driveway. Mr. LaRue volunteered to work with Mr. Johnson regarding this.

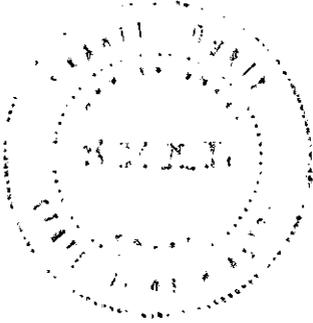
Chairman Wylie agreed to notify the group present of the decision made regarding the project.

Kirby Johnson asked that a vote be taken of the audience regarding their preferred alternative. Chairman Wylie agreed, and Alternative #1 received 16 votes, Alternative #2 received no votes, and Alternative #3 received 19 votes. A vote to leave the road as is was taken, and no votes were received for this.

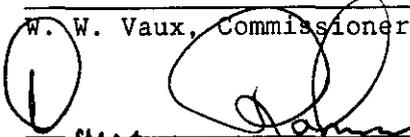
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rohrer motioned to adjourn the proceedings. Commissioner Wylie seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

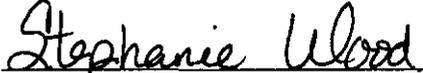
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON




Ruth Wylie, Chairman

W. W. Vaux, Commissioner

Dave Rohrer, Commissioner

ATTEST:


Stephanie Wood, Clerk
Skagit County Board of Commissioners