



DATE: January 9, 2023

MEMO TO: John Wasik, Chair
Planning Committee

FROM: Randall L. Seebach
Director of Planning and Land Preservation

REQUEST: Provide policy direction regarding a request from the Village of Volo (the “Village”) for a 0.2-acre permanent easement at Marl Flat Forest Preserve required for Fish Lake Road improvements and the installation and long-term maintenance of a multi-use path.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Public Access and Connections, Leadership.

FINANCIAL DATA: There is no financial impact at this time.

BACKGROUND: On April 5, 2021, the Planning Committee gave policy direction to work with the Grant Township Road District (the “Township”) regarding a 0.2-acre permanent easement at Marl Flat Forest Preserve, for Fish Lake Road improvements and the installation and long-term maintenance of a multi-use path. Since that date, the Village has assumed control over the project and will be responsible for the maintenance as well.

The improvements include minor road widening to provide a full 11-foot wide lane in both directions, drainage improvements, road re-surfacing, and construction of a new 0.7-mile 8-foot wide multi-use path. The proposed path will link the Township’s existing path along Molidor Road, Grant Township Center, the Grant Township High School athletic fields and Big Hollow School to the Millennium Trail and Marl Flat Forest Preserve.

As part of the proposed improvements, the Village wants to construct and maintain the new path within a 0.2-acre permanent easement on District land, so that they can avoid removing seven (7) high quality native trees within the Fish Lake Road right of way – those trees would have to be removed if the path was constructed within the right of way. The Village has agreed in principle to provide the construction and long-term maintenance of the new path at no cost to the District; those obligations would be included in the document granting an easement to the Village.

Based upon the April 5, 2021 policy direction, the District provided a letter of support on April 9, 2021. Per requirements related to federal funding for the project, the Village cannot negotiate right-of-way acquisition until design approval is received. The Village has agreed to draft the easement, and in exchange for protection of the native trees and providing increased access to the Millennium Trail, staff recommends waiving all fees associated with the easement, including the cost of preparing any other necessary documents.

Staff is seeking Committee approval to (i) continue discussion with the Village, and (ii) to negotiate an easement agreement and any other necessary documentation with the Village.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Corporate Counsel.