

Q & A Regarding the recent mailing on the Newport Rd sidewalk proposal (as of: 12 Feb 2014)

Q: Why is a sidewalk all the way down Newport not being given more serious consideration?

A: This option was considered previously, but was rejected by residents along Newport Road due to the substantial changes required for the construction of an “up to code” pathway. For more information please refer to pg 5 of the City project engineer’s presentation (Newport Sidewalk-Resurfacing Jan 2014 Presentation v2.pdf) as well as pgs 6-7 of the HoA’s presentation (Riverwood-homeowners-mtg_Newport-sidewalk_140203_RevA.pdf).

Q: Why should the homeowners be assessed?

A: State and City law holds that sidewalks are an “improvement” and that properties benefitting from the improvement can be assessed. The Riverwood bylaws and Condominium agreement have specific clauses stating that Riverwood can be assessed for improvements (not just sidewalks) along Newport Road. For more information please refer to pg 11 of the City project engineer’s presentation (Newport Sidewalk-Resurfacing Jan 2014 Presentation v2.pdf) as well as pgs 5 and 8 of the HoA’s presentation (Riverwood-homeowners-mtg_Newport-sidewalk_140203_RevA.pdf).

Q: What is the current reserve fund balance? What are the cost estimates and timing for the other projects such as fence replacement and pond work?

A: The Board is required in the bylaws to maintain a reserve fund of at least 10% of the budget. With the current \$400 annual dues and 77 units, this is approximately \$3100. Given the extent of the common areas in the subdivision, the Board feels that a general reserve of approximately twice this is appropriate for contingencies.

The bylaws also direct the Board to carefully consider the needs of the Condominium to determine whether additional reserve funds should be held for other purposes. The Board anticipates several potentially significant projects in the coming years, and it is this Board’s philosophy to gradually acquire the necessary reserves. This will hopefully avoid any sudden and substantial special assessments to pay for these items.

The Board is currently holding reserves for the following potential projects:

1. Fencing along M-14: This fence is wooden slats with metal poles and is approximately 15 years old. In recent years a number of repairs have been made as needed. However, the Board anticipates that eventually (2- to 5-year time frame) a wholesale replacement of this fence will be necessary. There are approximately 500-600 feet of fencing, running from the Riverwood Nature area to the west, behind the houses on Riverwood Drive and Timber Trail. Recently completed fencing projects (much smaller as well) indicate that replacement could cost \$15,000 or more.
2. Detention / retention ponds: The Board has fielded a number of complaints about the ponds in the subdivision. Initial investigations have indicated that the ponds may no longer be working as intended or may have been originally constructed improperly. The Board has contacted two

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civil engineering firms to obtain formal opinions on and recommendations for maintenance and improvements to the ponds. This review will be completed in the spring/summer of 2014. Although no estimates have been received yet, if extensive rework of the pond network is required, this could conceivably cost \$20,000 or more.

Thus the Board is holding reserves of approximately \$40,000, which is allocated as follows:

1. General reserves: \$5,000
2. Fencing reserve: \$15,000
3. Pond reserve: \$20,000

The Board is proposing to use some of these future reserves to defray the immediate cost of the Newport Road sidewalk. The proposed level of contribution would be \$200 per household, for a total of \$15,400. This one-time expenditure would reduce the allocated reserves to approximately \$25,000 (of which \$5,000 must be maintained as the general reserve).

The Board anticipates no increase in the amount of annual dues due to funding the sidewalk. The reserve funds will be replaced as part of the normal yearly budgeting process.

Q: When will we know about the Open Issues, in particular, the impact on busing?

A: The Board is working to close these open issues, however, no specific time-table is available. The City is planning to hold a formal meeting with all affected homeowners sometime around the end of February or beginning of March. It is anticipated that at this meeting, final plans, costs, and payment schedules would be made available.

The Board has had no formal contact with the AAPS. However, the principal at Wines Elementary (Mr. DeYoung) is a Riverwood resident and attended the meeting on 03 Feb. Mr. DeYoung has offered to follow-up with the AAPS on this issue, but again, no timetable can be given. Principal DeYoung also gave the opinion that with the budget cuts the district is facing, there is a distinct possibility that Riverwood could lose bus service in any subsequent year, whether the sidewalk is constructed or not.

If busing is eliminated and the sidewalk is not constructed now, then the community is left in a worse position. Walking will be as it is now, and any attempt at future sidewalk construction will undoubtedly be more expensive.

Q: One of our biggest concerns is that the bridge only has a high barrier on one side. Does the proposal include a safety barrier on the open side?

A: The bridge is the property and responsibility of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). To the best of our knowledge, MDOT has no plans to make any changes or improvements to the bridge.

The Board has requested that the City project engineer verify this, however, in the Board's opinion it seems extremely unlikely that any improvements will be made.