

Brighton-Pittsford Post – “From the Supervisor” column – September 4, 2014 issue
Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

Sidewalks projects, revisited

In January, one of my first acts as Town Supervisor was to move to the head of the Town’s public works agenda three sidewalk projects: East Avenue, the Safe Routes to School Project for Calkins, Mendon Center and Tobey Roads, and the Stone Road project.

Until shovels go into the ground – or at least, until the first neighborhood informational meetings are scheduled – the tremendous amount of work that goes into projects such as these remains largely invisible to the public. This work involves planning, engineering, designing, funding and detailed interaction, over time, with the State Department of Transportation. Numerous approvals must be obtained and to that end we prepare numerous submissions. We update the status of these initiatives on the Town website, but unless you’ve consulted it or contacted Town Hall, you may scarcely be faulted for wondering if we’ve progressed at all.

Project by project, here’s what’s been completed since January and what remains to be done before we can pour concrete.

1. Calkins, Mendon Center, Tobey Road Project

We’ve obtained approval from State DOT for: (1) Self-performing the work, thereby saving substantially on costs; (2) the project cost estimate; (3) the Construction Management Plan; (4) technical specifications regarding the traffic signal; (5) bid specifications for the traffic signal; (6) design report; (7) highway permit.

We have submitted to State DOT the Project Plans and have applied to Monroe County DOT for the required County highway permit; approvals for both are pending. We expect to be able to schedule a public information meeting in September. Unless information developed at that meeting results in project modifications triggering a need for further approvals from the State or County, we can then proceed with construction.

2. East Avenue

We’ve submitted to State DOT a preliminary plan and an analysis and proposal for phasing of the project. State approvals of both are pending. Once approval is granted, we will schedule a public information meeting. Unless changes resulting from public comment result in project modifications triggering a need for further approvals from the State or County, we will prepare final design and bid specifications and the Town Board will vote on approval of the project and its funding. At this point, and subject to the timing of approvals being granted by other levels of government, we reasonably can expect to begin construction next summer if the project is approved by Town Board.

3. Stone Road

We have completed and submitted to the County DOT a preliminary plan. Following approval of the preliminary plan, the next step will be a public information meeting, which currently we expect to schedule this fall. On the basis of public comment and DOT comments to the preliminary plan, we then would prepare final design and bid specifications, after which the project would go to the Town Board for a vote on project funding and approval. If approved by the Town Board, at this stage we reasonably can expect work to begin next spring and to be completed by the end of next summer.

This summary may convey to you something of the enormous amount of planning and preparation that sidewalk projects demand. Since reviving these projects at the beginning of the year, the Town government has made substantial progress toward the goal, bringing us that much closer to actually installing sidewalks.

As you can imagine, the interactions with the State and County Departments of Transportation, for the purpose of obtaining approvals, are detailed, addressing many points. This can take time, and does. It's worth it. These State and County agencies help us make sure our new sidewalks will be safe and sound. The value of their advice and direction is inestimable.

Keep your eye on the "Project Updates" section of the Town website for additional progress reports as we move forward with these significant projects for improving safety and walkability of our community. Should you wish to comment on our sidewalk projects or on any matter affecting the Town, you can reach me at 248-6220 or by e-mail at bsmith@townofpittsford.org. As always, you are also welcome stop in to see me if you're coming by Town Hall.