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Streetscape Update for Villagers from President Pam Hansen

As you know, the Franklin Road Streetscape project is underway after more than 2 years planning. Contractors are preparing Franklin Road for long-awaited lighting, landscaping, pedestrian walkways, drainage improvements and restoration of the tree canopy. The work will continue until mid-November and be assured, I and many others are hoping for perfect weather until the work is completed.

On Wednesday August 5, the Village received Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Jarbou's ruling on a lawsuit filed by Franklin residents Vic Cestar, Mike Flevaris, Suzanne McClow and Roger McClow and later joined by residents Kristina Janssens, Dane Downer and Donald Foss to block the project, and in particular the construction of new sidewalks.

The judge ruled in the Village's favor on two of three claims asserted and in favor of the complainants on one. Here is a quick summary:

1. The Village may lawfully apply proceeds from the 2016 street improvement bond proposal that funded the road repaving project toward the Franklin Road Streetscape project. This is an important ruling and recognizes the propriety of your village council as stewards of your money to enhance and maintain the village with important public infrastructure improvements.
2. The street improvement bond proposal, supported in 2016 by a majority of voters, was lawfully approved. The Court confirmed that state law requires a simple majority of voters to approve a local public improvement bond, and the state law requirement supersedes the conflicting and outdated 3/5 supermajority vote requirement stated in the Village Charter.
3. The Village Charter provision that states the Village Council does not have the power to construct any new sidewalks in residential areas prohibits the construction of new sidewalks on the west side of Franklin Road in front of the complainants' homes and by extension, along the east side of Franklin Road to 13 Mile Road.

So, what has changed? For one thing, a long-standing discussion and source of conflict in the village has been resolved and we can move on. New sidewalks will not be installed in front of homes in what the Court has deemed to be residential areas. The Village Charter is an organic document that will continue to be honored, updated and amended to meet the current needs of residents by a majority vote of Franklin residents.

Thanks for your patience as we begin construction. Franklin Road will remain open, just down to one lane for a couple months. Remember to check the Monday emails that provide information on the work planned for that week and contact any trustee or the Village Office if you have questions or concerns.

Best Regards,
Pam Hansen