

VILLAGE OF BELLPORT

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**VILLAGE ATTORNEY
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June 11, 2024

Dear Residents,

By the end of next week, we expect to have Browns Lane and Shore Road opened to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

We understand and share the frustration surrounding this closure which has gone on for nearly three years. Our administration, which took office in July 2023, prioritized reopening the road as quickly as possible while ensuring safety, aesthetics, and drainage and other practicalities such as parking.

Our goals for this project included:

- **Safety First:** Navigating regulations and standards were paramount. We used Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) codes, (617-60, 61 and 62) as well as other standards and the advice from individuals with roadwork experience to guide decisions regarding the guiderail and steel backing.
- Browns Lane's incline facing the Great South Bay necessitated a curved guiderail design. This design, in the event of a car losing control, would redirect the car back onto the road rather than into a rigid steel barrier and potentially into the water.
- **Anticipating Unintended Consequences:** We aimed to avoid creating a parking area for idling vehicles, particularly during sunrise.
- **Drainage Solutions:** A special drainage garden, with salt-tolerant, well-draining materials between the guiderail and bulkheading, are planned to address drainage concerns. This was a recommendation from the engineer at Nelson and Pope. The details of the garden design have not been finalized.
- **Accessibility:** Both ends of the guiderail will have access points for pedestrians.

Project challenges included:

- **DEC Approval:** Determining whether we needed approval was crucial. Working with Brant Rainer at Nelson and Pope (professional engineers) we were able to make our case with the DEC and obtained a letter of no jurisdiction allowing the project to move forward.
- **Drainage Improvements:** Upgrading the drainage system underground was essential to address flooding concerns at the eastern corner of the project. When the road floods in cold weather, it can create an icy, potentially dangerous condition for drivers and pedestrians. This work was completed and early reports from residents suggest great improvement. However, we must accept that at sea level, controlling flooding completely would be impossible.

- **Seasonal Constraints:** Completing roadwork during winter wasn't feasible due to weather limitations. Rain can and has also delayed work at times.

Transparency and Public Input:

In the duly noticed public work session held on November 13, 2023, this nearly three-year-old project was discussed in depth, including detailed plans, on both in-person and virtual platforms. In the November 27, 2023, Board Meeting, the public was offered a chance to make public comments/suggestions. In addition, public comments about the project were possible in the subsequent five public Board meetings from December 2023 through April 2024. We, as a board considered all timely made comments from the public.

After Browns Lane and Shore Road are paved, we will move to complete the area behind the guiderail. This area has a practical purpose which is to help with drainage while being esthetically pleasing and appropriate for the space. We appreciate your patience and understanding. We are committed to completing this project thoughtfully and will keep you updated on further developments.

Sincerely,

The Village Administration

June 2024