**Fox Hills – History of our Concrete Streets**

**Description of Document**

This document describes the full history of our how streets of Fox Hills were constructed, and a detailed description of various repairs by the Township. Also described are proposals to rebuild or repair the streets via a Special Assessment.

**Brief Summary**

1963 to 1969

* Initial Construction takes place using concrete per the construction code at the time

1970

* Bloomfield Township makes a deal with Oakland County for Bloomfield Township to perform street maintenance

1975

* Township’s contractor performs maintenance of streets, using high pressure air to dislodge debris, vacuum it up and fill in the separations with hot liquid tar.
* This is a well-known, high-quality process for concrete street repair.

1978

* Township applies hot asphalt coating over deteriorated concrete slabs.
* The asphalt is placed directly on top of the concrete
* While initially it looks smooth, over time, the asphalt does not hold up well

2000-2010

* Fox Hills Board member convinces Bloomfield Township to apply some of the township moneys to replace the most deteriorated street slabs without cost to Fox Hills.
* The Township agrees and replaces some of the slabs that were previously covered with asphalt, as the deteriorated asphalt resulted in an uneven surface, detrimental to street snow plows.
* The Township does this maintenance annually until around 2010

2016

* Fox Hills Board member investigates two options for repairing and replacing the streets that at this point are badly deteriorating, as they’re now around 50 years old. One option is to replace the streets completely for a cost of $10 million dollars. Another option is partial replacement of the worst sections for a cost of approximately $716k. The cheaper replacement option for a SAD (special assessment) is voted on and fails to pass.

**Detailed History**

Our Fox Hills concrete streets and curbs-all four miles of them-were constructed between 1963 and 1969 by contractors hired by the various home builders who platted and constructed our 358 homes, community house, tennis courts and local school. Our concrete streets were constructed using high-quality materials per the codes at the time.

Our streets are owned by the Road Commission of Oakland County (RCOC). **Having concrete streets makes our neighborhood unique as other communities have concrete curbs but with asphalt streets**. Our underground utilities, i.e., water, gas, electricity and sanitary sewer system are not located under our concrete streets, but within the front lawn area of each property.

**In 1970**, Bloomfield Township made a deal with Oakland County for Bloomfield Township to perform surface maintenance of our streets such as power sweeping, salting, snow plowing and patching pot holes, etc. using available best practice patching processes and materials to provide a smooth vehicle surface. Bloomfield Township receives funding from the RCOC and from your Bloomfield Township property taxes to pay for this maintenance. **This money cannot be used to repair or replace concrete street sections or curb sections of Fox Hills, as specified by state law, Public Act No. 51**.

Michigan State, Oakland County and Bloomfield Township do not have legislation to collect taxes from property owners to pay for repairs of residential street. Therefore, we, the Property Owners are responsible to pay for all street maintenance.

**In 1975**, a Township’s contractor used high pressure air to dislodge debris from cracks that occurred within a concrete slab due to age, weather and use as well as in the separation gaps between slabs, followed by vacuuming up the debris and immediately filling in the separations with hot liquid tar. This is an effective process for maintaining and repairing concrete streets.

**In 1978**, Bloomfield Township applied a hot asphalt coating over many deteriorated concrete street slabs as a temporary surface repair. While initially this process provided a smooth motor vehicle street surface, it eventually broke down and we were faced with a continuing plague of potholes that needed to be hot asphalt filled each spring.

**In 2000**, a member of your Board convinced Bloomfield Township to take money they saved from Improved management operations (approximately $145,000/year) and use it to replace many of our most deteriorated concrete street slabs without any cost to Fox Hills property owners. Bloomfield Township mainly replaced those slabs previously covered with an asphalt topping that was described previously including those slabs, due to their unevenness, that were detrimental to the life of their snow plow blades. The Township’s annual maintenance took place over the next 10 years from 2000-2010. So, every new looking concrete street slab you see from curb to curb today, with either two large slabs or four slabs is the result of this action.

**In 2016**, a member of your Board investigated two alternatives to provide new streets, both by using a Special Assessment District (SAD), which is a common process used to raise funds in a measured way to complete a large and costly project. One SAD would replace all of our concrete street slabs (the Oakland County Plan) and one SAD would just replace our most deteriorated concrete street slabs (the Bloomfield Township Plan).

**THE OAKLAND COUNTY PLAN-2016:**

Oakland County proposed the following Special Assessment District (SAD) for Fox Hills. Their plan would replace all our concrete street slabs-even those slabs that had already been replace by the Township. The estimated cost to each Property Owner (corner lot owners would pay the same dollar amount as the rest of the owners even though they have more street area in front of and alongside of their property) was $27,000. Total project cost would be almost $10,000,000. Each property could pay back this loan over a 15-year period-that’s about $2,000 per year including interest or in quarterly payments of $7,500 or just in one payment saving on the interest cost. Our Michigan State legislators decided, that during this SAD, when a property is sold, both the seller and buyer would prorate one year’s cost based upon the number of days each owned the property.

The County would coordinate collecting property owner’s signatures, as listed on each property’s deed, who by signing, voted in the affirmative for this SAD. Needed to proceed with this project required at least 239 property’s (66 2/3) to ensure the majority agreed with the SAD parameters. The County would collect the money from each property or a lien would be placed on the property to ensure the RCOC would eventually receive their money. This project would probably take about two-three years to complete with the majority of our streets always being in disarray.

Demolition would be either the entire street or possibly only a certain length of about 10 property’s and would start with the interior streets; Sedgefield, Rolling Rock, Weybridge, Hunters Ridge, Rock Ledge, Stone Hollow Court, Wickford Court, Fox Glen Court, Post House Court and Post Chase Court. Naturally the contractor would like to remove the entire street area and curbs maximizing their financial benefit. They would haul away the debris, regrade the soil, top it with a layer of large stone followed by gravel, compaction of both layers with a power roller, install curbing forms, install existing rain water collection basins at their original location followed by pouring and smoothing the cement curb and removing the forms. The asphalt street between the curbs would then be laid-two layers-with compaction of each by a power roller. Leaving the outer streets in place allows easy movement of trucks to bring in supplies and haul away debris, and provides places for property owner vehicle parking while their street areas was under construction. Periodic lack of driveway access would be the norm throughout the demolition and construction areas. School bus pick up areas would be limited so children would have to walk to specific pick-up places.

After much discussion, the Fox Hills Board decided not to pursue the Oakland County SAD Plan due to its cost, inconvenient property owner vehicle parking, limited children school bus pick up locations, lack of emergency vehicle access to all property’s, disruption of vehicle traffic flow, periods of dusty/muddy street areas, complexity, and the length of time necessary for this SAD Plan’s completion.

**THE BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP PLAN-2016:**

One Board member, working with Bloomfield Township developed this special SAD Plan for Fox Hills. It would cost each property $400 per year over a five-year timeframe (total of $2,000 per property over five years) to just replace our most deteriorated concrete street slabs. The $400 per year assessment amount was decided based upon the recent dues increase proposal so property owners would not have two large payments each year. We could have elected to pay more each year and therefore more concrete street slabs could be replaced. The Township would collect the money $400 x 358 properties = $143,200 which would be just about the same dollar amount Bloomfield Township used each year during the 2000–2010-time frame. The Township would place a lien on any property that did not pay to ensure they would eventually receive their money. The length of time to complete this SAD would be five (5) years. Our Michigan State legislators decided, that during this SAD, when a property is sold, both the seller and buyer would prorate one year’s cost based upon the number of days each owned the property. The actual time the contractors would be working in Fox Hills would be 4-5 weeks with no action again until the next year.

Hiring the Township to work directly with us seemed to be the best way to go since we know the Township personnel; they are accessible, responsible and accountable to us and will initiate the contract with the contractor(s) and monitor their progress. In other words, the Township would be our project manager working with our Fox Hills’ Community Association Board, mainly with our Streets, Rain Water Collection Basins and Architectural Control Trustee. Hiring our own contractor to do this project was not considered to be a good idea due to its size, complexity and the legal ramifications involved.

This SAD would also allow us to clean and seal joints/cracks in certain concrete street slabs with hot liquid tar-a successfully used process noted early in this writeup to further preserve those concrete slabs that are currently in acceptable condition and do not need to be replaced at that time. We can keep our concrete streets, we would spend less money each year than would be required in the Oakland County Plan, we would always have vehicle access throughout our community (only one side of a street being replaced at a time), school bus access would be as normal, less dust and dirt, unrestricted property owner vehicle access to all property driveways and streets.

The contractor would remove the street slabs and curbs decided upon (one side of the street at a time), haul away the debris, regrade the soil, top it with a layer of large stone followed with that of gravel, compaction of both layers with a power roller. Construct the curbing forms, install existing rain water collection basins in their previous locations followed by pouring and smoothing the cement for both the curbs and slabs and remove the forms. The other side of the street would remain for emergency vehicle access and normal traffic flow. With proper planning, the contractor would work on street areas close by, eliminating equipment moves and therefore we obtain more replaced deteriorated concrete sections per the dollar spent.

At the end of the five-year time frame, the amount of street slabs replaced would be evaluated against those slabs still remaining to be replaced both by our Board and Bloomfield Township. Then at that time, we could decide if we want to do another five-year SAD now or wait a few years and then do another one.

Bloomfield Township requested that at least 50.1 percent of our 358 Property’s (182) vote yea to approve this SAD. Bloomfield Township would coordinate collecting the necessary property owner’s signatures, as listed on each property’s deed, who by signing, voted in the affirmative for this SAD. Actually, the Township would like to get at least a 60 percent of the 358 property’s approval rate (215), to make it clear that it is indeed favored by the majority of Property Owners. But they agreed that 50.1 percent yeas would be acceptable.

A majority of our Board, at that time, did not support this SAD Plan and it did not receive the number of yes votes required to implement it. So, the Board decided to put it on the back burner for another time to implement.

**CURRENT-2021**:

Fox Hills streets continue to deteriorate. While the Township will sometimes patch the worst potholes with hot asphalt, it is not nearly enough to keep up with the level of deterioration of the 50+ year old streets. At some point in time, the Fox Hills Board in conjunction with the Township and with community support will have to come up with a viable plan for repairing or replacing our streets.